The NOT-QUITE PURITANS

HENRY·W·LAWRENCE

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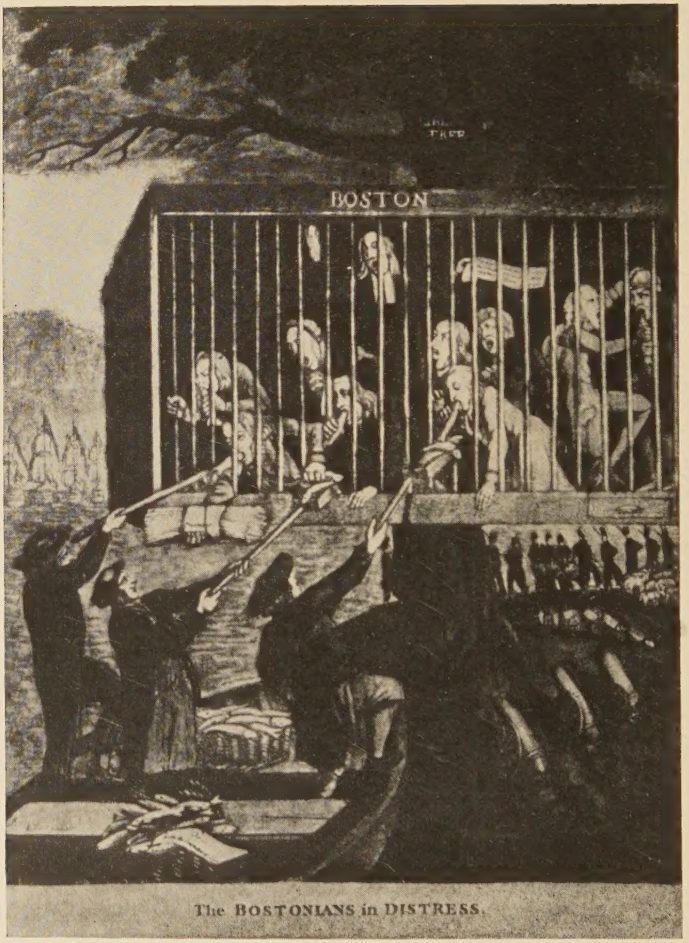

From Goss's "Life of Paul Revere"

THE CARICATURIST EMPLOYS THE CAGE, A FAMILIAR INSTITUTION IN NEW ENGLAND, TO SYMBOLIZE THE PLIGHT OF BOSTONIANS, ISOLATED BY THE BOSTON PORT BILL

THE NOT-QUITE PURITANS

Some Genial Follies and Peculiar Frailties of Our Revered New England Ancestors

BY

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"It is Facts that are needed: Facts, Facts, Facts. When facts have been supplied, each of us can try to reason from them. The investigators who are called on to supply them may have their sense of the duty owed to truth quickened by knowing that their work, carefully and honestly done, without fear or favour, will be profitable to all free peoples."

VISCOUNT BRYCE

"We must have a weak spot or two in a character before we can love it much."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

PREFACE

NOTHING new could possibly be uttered about the *austerity* of the Puritan, but there is still much to be said concerning his *frivolity*. During more than a century, tireless orators have stupefied their reverent hearers with undiscriminating praise of the stern virtues that were the glory of early New England; and when the image breakers of our own irreverent times have risen to reply, they have usually seen and smitten only a figure of unhuman sternness, made awful by his worshipers. It is high time that justice be done to the humanity, the frailty, and the frivolity of our formidable ancestors. For example, all we loyal New Englanders have known from our youth up of Cotton Mather's views on witchcraft and his discussion of the "nature, number, and operations of the devils"; but why have we not been as freely informed of how he narrowly escaped a breach-of-promise suit while courting his second wife? We shall not love them less, these forefathers of ours, if we see them gay as well as grave; and we may cease to think of them as largely the creatures of a moralized and provincial mythology.

New England in the seventeenth century was probably no more wholesome than it is in the twentieth. Then, as now, a few great and good men and women tried in vain to "sell" godliness to the multitude, but there were few buyers, though at that time everybody was compelled to attend the sale. Judging by the acts of the vast majority, rather than by the words of a very small number, these early New Englanders were spiritually akin to our present generation. Some few of them were saints; a few more were hypocrites; but most of them were neither. Their amount of true holiness was, per capita, about the same as ours, but it took a somewhat different form, and they talked about it more than we do. Their normal human cantankerousness was often so camouflaged in pious phrases that it was, and still is, mistaken for godliness. Probably they were as bewildered as we are about how life should be lived. Certainly they were often discouraged with their efforts to regulate it, and they had many private doubts as to whether the method of sitting on the lid was, after all, the best way to deal with human feelings.

The seventeenth century specialized in repression. We of the twentieth have a right to demand that history tell us the truth about how the repressionism of Puritan New England really worked, among the masses of the people. It seems to have been no more than indifferently successful, even in that age of lean

adversity. A large fraction of the population submitted to, rather than shared in, the religious and moral fervor which has made the period notorious. They hardly qualified as belonging in the company of the saints. They were "the not-quite Puritans."

The stating of such conclusions as these is not, however, a primary purpose of this book. The author believes that the correction of the popular and traditional view can best be accomplished, not by stating anybody's conclusions, but rather by adducing facts which throw light upon the most neglected aspect of Puritan life — namely, its lighter side. As there have been a vast accumulation and a very wide dissemination of the facts concerning the solemn and heroic aspects, the interests of perspective, balance, and truthfulness will be served by the presentation here of the gayeties and the frailties. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the account now attempted is not that of the Puritan life and character as a whole, but only of its lighter and less pious sides. That the manner of presentation is far from solemn seems appropriate to the subject matter.

Before the reader arrives at his own conclusions let him throw the final pages of my book into the same cauldron of consideration with these opening words.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my debt to Mr. James Truslow Adams, who generously read the manuscript of this book and offered wise suggestions

for its improvement, and to Mr. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, who has given invaluable editorial aid. To both these scholars I am further indebted for words of encouragement, spoken several years ago, which led me to complete this study.

HENRY W. LAWRENCE

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THE NOT-QUITE PURITANS

I

THE SMART DRESSERS AND THEIR "WICKED APPARELL"

Did the founders of New England wear stylish clothing?

Did the godly dames and daughters of the Mayflower crave pretty frocks and finery? Moreover, did their doting husbands and fathers permit, and finance, the keeping up with the latest fashions in dress?

The historical records which give answers to these questions make it fairly clear that the earliest Bostonians, for instance, were not essentially unlike the present inhabitants of that city in their attitude toward the everlasting problem of what to wear and how to wear it. Possibly their clothes did not fit quite as accurately as ours do to-day, and undoubtedly the fashions in dress changed somewhat more slowly then than they do now; but there is ample evidence to show that costly and stylish clothes were commonly worn by those who could afford them, and by many who could not. Ministers and magistrates sometimes objected, but they were gradually overruled by the giddier and more persistent sex; not, however, before numerous laws on the subject had been enacted and many penalties inflicted.

As early as 1634, "some new and immodest fashions" alarmed the authorities of Massachusetts into ordering "that no person, either man or woman, shall hereafter make or buy any apparel, either woolen, silk, or linen, with any lace on it, silver, gold, silk, or thread." A prohibition was likewise laid on "slashed clothes, other than one slash in each sleeve, and another in the back"; also on "all gold or silver girdles, hat-bands, belts, ruffs, beaver hats." With due regard for the avoidance of waste, however, the law allowed the present possessors "to wear out such apparel as they are now provided of, except the immoderate great sleeves, slashed apparel, immoderate great rails, long wings, &c."

This early prohibition law evidently proved inadequate, especially with the women; whereupon moral suasion was tried. Governor Winthrop writes that, in 1638, "The court, taking into consideration the great disorder general through the country in costliness of apparel, and following new fashions, sent for the elders of the churches, and conferred with them about it, and laid it upon them, as belonging to them, to redress it, by urging it upon the consciences of their people, which they promised to do. But little was done about it; for divers of the elders' wives, etc., were in some measure partners in the general disorder."

Winthrop thus ungallantly passes the blame over

to the ladies, where most of it probably belonged; yet, in the very next year, 1639, it was found necessary to pass a law against the improper clothing worn by frivolous males. "Immoderate great breeches" were forbidden; also broad shoulder bands, double ruffles, and capes. It seems, too, that the dandies were adorning their shoes with silk roses, till this law plucked them off. The remote ancestress of the present-day flapper was also dealt with in the clause which proscribed "short sleeves, whereby the nakedness of the arm may be discovered in the wearing thereof."

In this matter, even demure and humble little Plymouth needed watching, and got it. One day, in 1638, a stranger appeared amid its traffic wearing "red silk stockings." He was, of course, investigated, and the startled community doubtless breathed several sighs of relief when they learned that the festive hosiery had been stolen in Boston. Yet Elder Brewster, than whom no one was more closely in touch with the fashions of Heaven, seems to have been the owner of "one blue cloth coat," "one violet-color cloth coat," and "one green waistcoat."

In 1647, a disgruntled observer of Boston fashions remarked sourly that if it takes, as the saying goes, nine tailors to make a man, it must take at least nineteen to make a woman.

The problem of gay clothing was, however, not

merely an æsthetic, nor even an ethical, one. It was largely economic and social. What really worried the lawmakers most was to see fine clothes worn by people who could not afford them, or whose humble rank made it unseemly for them to sport such finery. The statute of 1651 accordingly provided "that no person within this jurisdiction, or any of their relations depending upon them, whose visible estates, real and personal, shall not exceed the true and indifferent value of two hundred pounds, shall wear any gold or silver, lace or gold or silver buttons or any bone lace above two shillings per yard or silk hoods or scarfs, upon the penalty of ten shillings for every such offence; and every such delinquent to be presented by the Grand Jury." In the same year, the Court recorded its "utter detestation that men and women of meane condition, education, and calling, should take uppon them the garbe of gentlemen by wearing of gold or silver lace, or buttons or poynts at their knees, or walke in great boots, or women of the same rank to wear silks or tiffany hoods or scarfs."

The enforcement of this law and others like it proved difficult from the beginning, and it gradually broke down altogether. The great Northampton raid of 1676 seems to have been the turning point, and a sixteen-year-old flapper maid named Hannah Lyman seems to have led the army of the smart dressers in defying the magistrates. A wholesale attempt was be-

ing made to abolish "wicked apparell." Thirty-eight women and thirty young men were rounded up to answer charges of being too extravagantly dressed.

Hannah was not what is called a lady, in rank or in fortune, but she surely did know how to wear clothes. Moreover, she greatly enjoyed the swish and the feel of real silk, and she was generally regarded by her frivolous contemporaries as one of the smartest dressers in the colony. Naturally, this annoyed the Grand Jury, so they hauled her up for examination, expecting no doubt that she would display a decent meekness in their august presence. Instead of meekness, however, she displayed her most daring, stunning, silky gown, right before the astonished, but nevertheless attentive, eyes of these guardians of the morals of the commonwealth. She really did look well, and she knew it. They knew it, too, but they could not very well admit it, even to themselves; hence they returned an austere indictment of her for "wearing silk in a flaunting manner, in an offensive way and garb, not only before but when she stood presented." She knew they did not really mean it, except officially; so she smiled at them dangerously, paid her fine, and probably uttered, with splendid dignity, the current equivalent of "I should worry." Soon afterward the law became a dead letter.

The war for independence, in dress, having been largely won in the latter part of the seventeenth cen-

tury, the eighteenth proceeded to enjoy its more ample liberty. Lacking fashion magazines for their guidance and inspiration, the ladies who would copy the latest European dress were offered the sight of dolls dressed in the height of foreign fashions. Witness the following advertisement: —

"To be seen at Mrs. Hannah Teats', a baby [a doll] drest after the newest fashions. . . . Lately arrived from London. Any ladies that desire to see it may either come or send. . . . If they come . . . two shillings, and if she waits on 'em it is seven shillings."

It was early in the eighteenth century that the marvelous and formidable feminine garment known as the hoop skirt began to block traffic and arouse controversy. A contemporary advertisement in the *Boston News Letter* announces: "Just published and sold by the Printer hereof, HOOP PETTICOATS, Arraigned and condemned by the Light of Nature and Law of God." Various dire calamities were predicted as divine punishment for this outrageous innovation in dress, among them an Indian massacre; and when an earthquake actually did occur, the inhabitants of at least one Massachusetts town were "so awakened by this awful Providence that the women generally laid aside their Hoop Petticoats."

The history of Windsor, Connecticut, tells of the first umbrella that ever came to that town. It arrived

in 1740, and was carried through the streets by the lady whose husband had sent it to her from abroad. It produced a riot of merriment and derision, the neighbors parading after her, carrying sieves balanced on broom handles.

"Parasols or umbrellas were unknown or rare," says Weeden *(History of New England)*, "in Norwich, Ct., about 1775. Immense fans were carried there, for sunshades as well as for flirting . . . the air. But 'umbrilloes' were made and used in Boston in 1768, the frames of mahogany, 'Persian compleat at six pounds ten shillings and in proportion for better silk.' Ladies, also, bought the sticks and frames and covered them for themselves. All these were doubtless used as parasols."

An English traveler in New England said that Boston men and women in 1740 dressed as gay every day as courtiers in England at a coronation. American dress was carefully modeled on European, especially English, modes, and men's wear was as rich as women's; but with all the richness there was little wastefulness. The sister of the rich Boston merchant Peter Faneuil, who built Faneuil Hall, sent her gowns to London to be turned and dyed, and her old ribbons and gowns to be sold. Little wastefulness, perhaps, but much extravagance in buying costly finery. A Frenchman who traveled extensively in America at the time of our war for independence wrote:

"The rage for dress among the women in America, in the very height of the miseries of the war, was beyond all bounds; nor was it confined to the great towns; it prevailed equally on the seacoasts and in the woods."

But why give the women all the blame in this business? The male heroes of the Revolution also had a high regard for smart clothes. Behold that eminent patriot and importer, John Hancock, receiving his friends at high noon. On his head is a scarlet velvet cap. He is wearing a blue damask gown lined with velvet, a white satin embroidered waistcoat, and black satin small clothes. White silk stockings and red morocco slippers complete the costume. Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed precisely like this.

Since many a sailing vessel that came from Europe brought quantities of gay raiment, probably we should not be astonished at the gorgeous costume worn by John Hancock, importer; but consider the following authentic description of a Boston printer just after the Revolution, and compare it with the garb of any present-day man of the press you happen to know: —

"He wore a pea-green coat, white vest, nankeen small clothes, white silk stockings, and pumps fastened with silver buckles which covered at least half the foot from instep to toe. His small clothes were tied at the knee with ribbon of the same color in

double bows, the ends reaching down to the ancles. His hair in front was well loaded with pomatum, frizzled or craped and powdered. Behind, his natural hair was augmented by the addition of a large queue called vulgarly a false tail, which, enrolled in some yards of black ribbon, hung half way down his back."

A queer-sounding rule of dress was that laid down by the authorities of Harvard College in 1754, forbidding the undergraduates to wear silk nightgowns. Plain thinking and high living was not to be tolerated either by day or by night, it might seem; but the nightgowns here referred to were not worn at night. They were a sort of dressing gown, of silk or damask; suitable for printers and importers, perhaps, but too luxurious for college students.

Nevertheless, mere schoolboys were sometimes outfitted rather handsomely. When John Livingstone, aged ten, went away to school in New England, late in the seventeenth century, his wardrobe included such items as the following: "Eleven new shirts; 8 plane cravats; 4 cravats with lace; 4 stripte wastecoats with black buttons; 1 flowered wastecoat; 3 pair gold buttons; 3 pair silver buttons; 2 pair fine blew stockings; 1 pair fine red stockings; 2 speckled handkerchiefs; 5 pair gloves; 1 pair blew plush britches."

A twelve-year-old lady arrived at a Boston finishing school with only twelve silk gowns. The authorities promptly wrote home that she must have at least

one more gown, of a "recently imported rich fabric." The home folks, sorely embarrassed that they had sent little daughter away with nothing to wear, immediately bought what was so badly needed.

Little girls had a pretty rough time of it, none the less, because fashion made them wear nearly all the uncomfortable ornamentals their mothers wore, including high-heeled shoes, heavy stays, and enormous hoop petticoats. To safeguard "that schoolgirl complexion," they were sheltered from the sun's rays by long-armed gloves, complexion masks, and sunbonnets fastened through the hair and under the chin.

Little boys had their troubles, too. They often had to wear wigs, just like the grown-ups. "I have seen the bill for a wig for William Freeman," says Mrs. Earle, "dated 1754; he was a child seven years old. His father paid nine pounds for it, and the same for wigs for his other boys of nine and ten."

Wig-wearing men caused as much anger and amusement in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century as have bobbed-haired women in the early twentieth. "By 1675," says the authority quoted above, "wigs had become common enough to be denounced by the Massachusetts government, and to be preached against by many ministers; while other ministers proudly wore them. Wigs were called horrid bushes of vanity, and hundreds of other disparaging names, which seemed to make them more popular." They

varied from year to year. Sometimes they swelled out at the sides, or rose in great puffs, or turned under in heavy rolls, or hung in braids and curls and pigtails. They were made of human hair, goat's hair, calves' and cows' tails, of thread, silk, and mohair. They had scores of silly and meaningless names, such as "grave full-bottom," "giddy feather-top," "long-tail," "fox-tail," "drop-wig," and so forth. They were bound and braided with pink, green, red, and purple ribbons; sometimes all these colors in one wig. They were heavy and very hot, and also very expensive, often costing what would be more than a hundred dollars to-day. The care of them was a great item, often ten pounds a year for a single wig; and some gentlemen owned eight or ten wigs. Verily the smart dressers of Puritan New England were willing to pay the price, in both cash and comfort.

The female of the species always tried to surpass the male, then as now, and probably she succeeded, in this business of hair artistry. The amazing things the ladies built on top of their heads caused their lords and masters to run to the newspaper with outbursts of astonishment and contempt. Thus, in 1731, a citizen of Massachusetts ventured to express himself in print as follows: "In the Head Dress . . . the very highest point of female eloquence, I find such a variety of modes, such a medley of decoration, that 't is hard to comprehend. Lace and cambric, gauze and

fringe, feathers and ribbands, create such a confusion that it defies art, judgment, and taste to reduce them to any order." Then he proceeds to score in particular "that ornament of the Hair which is styled the Horns." In the next issue of the same paper, some high-spirited dame came back at her critic most disrespectfully. "I confess," she wrote, "that the men with their wigs make us women extremely merry, and frequently put me in mind of my favorite monkey, both in figure and apishness."

This saucy but apt retort makes us wonder whether our Puritan foremothers were, after all, so demure and downtrodden as we have imagined. If we do discover them to be a little more akin to ourselves in such perversities, and their austere husbands also not quite free from life's pleasant vanities, shall either we or they be injured? Such revelations will interfere, no doubt, with the devout practice of ancestor worship, but not at all with our cordial admiration for the heroic qualities these ancestors so often displayed, notwithstanding their ungainly headdress and their gay apparel.

II

COQUETTES AND FOPS

"At the resurrection of the just," exclaimed a seventeenth-century preacher, indignantly, "there will be no such sight to be met as Angels carrying painted ladies in their arms." From which wrathful platitude it might be inferred that there were, nevertheless, somewhere in the speaker's neighborhood, a certain number of just such painted ladies, who would better mend their ways, and especially their practices of personal adornment, if they expected ever to avail themselves of angelic transportation.

There can be no doubt that vain and excessive personal adornment, at least in the matters of dress and hair artistry, was regrettably frequent among early New Englanders; and the regrets were frequently and angrily expressed by those responsible for the enforcement of God's will in the matter. The coquettes of the period, therefore, had a hard time; yet a few of them bravely did their best. They had much to overcome. When a girl bobbed her hair, or otherwise deformed it to meet the very latest seventeenth-century fashion, she had to expect not merely father's wrath and mother's tears, but also some public

comment from the minister on the Lord's Day, and a personal visit from the local magistrate. No doubt many of the young folks secretly longed for the astonishing beauty with which such a novel manner of hair-trimming would crown them, but only a few had the courage to try it and face the consequences.

Sometimes they were haled into court, after indictment by the Grand Jury along with murderers, thieves, and others who, like themselves, were dangerous to the community. Thus, the Records of the Essex County Quarterly Courts show that, during the session held at Ipswich in 1682, several such perilous females were dealt with: —

"Warrant, dated Apr. 14, 1682, for the appearance of those presented by the grand jury on Mar. 28, for folding their hair, frizzling and knots, and for wearing silk scarfs, Martha Rogers, Mary Browne and Elizabeth Browne, the glazier's daughters, Abigaill Metcalfe, Elizabeth Perkins, wife of Luke Perkins, Martha Watton, John Webster's daughter who lives with Mr. John Rogers, and Pricilla Carrell, Capt. Appleton's maid."

Of the criminals here listed, only the two who were servant girls were actually brought into court, and even they were let off without other penalty than the alarm and disgrace of the public trial. The record, under date of May 9, 1682, says: —

"John Webster's daughter, Mr. John Roger's serv-

ant, and Pricilla Carrell, Capt. Appleton's maid, presented for folding and frizzling their hair, and none appearing to give evidence, were discharged."

To all right-thinking people, the frizzle-haired coquette was scarcely more annoying than her male imitator, the dangerously long-haired man. As early as 1649, the governor, deputy governor, and magistrates of Massachusetts entered into an association to prevent the wearing of long hair, denouncing this alarming practice "of wearing long hair after the manner of ruffians and barbarous Indians," as "contrary to God's word," as "a thing uncivil and unmanly," "whereby men do demean themselves . . . and do corrupt good manners." The distinguished members of this bush league exhorted the elders of the churches to do their worst against the hideous practice.

The obvious advantage of the practice from the standpoint of the Indian in search of scalps does not seem to have been in the minds of the Massachusetts lawmakers, but rather its probable offensiveness to the Almighty, when, in 1675, amid the distresses of the Indian War, they condemned it officially in the following words: —

"Whereas, there is manifest pride openly appearing amongst us in that long hair, like woman's hair, is worn by some men, either their own or other's hair made into periwigs, and by some women wearing

borders of hair, and their cutting, curling, and immodest laying out their hair, especially amongst the younger sort, this Court doth declare this ill custom as offensive to them."

The wig, or periwig, was long a favorite moral windmill at which many a New England parson tilted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The quality of the theological lances broken in these jousts may be judged from a specimen sermon, quoted in part as follows: —

"Firstly: Adam, so long as he continued in innocency, did wear his own Hair, and not a Perriwig. Indeed, I do not see how it was possible that Adam should dislike his own hair, and therefore cut it off, so that he might wear a Perriwig, and yet have continued innocent.

"Secondly: When the Son of God appeared in the flesh, he did not, from a dislike of his own Hair, cut it off to wear a Perriwig. The Lord Jesus always did those things that pleased his Father; but if he had found fault with his own Hair, and had therefore cut it off to wear a Perriwig, he would have dishonored his Father; therefore, 't is evident that he did wear his own Hair and not a Perriwig.

"Thirdly: The Children of God will not wear Perriwigs after the Resurrection. The Body of Christ did not consume, nor his Hair wast in the Grave: he doubtless now wears the Hair that is essential to his

own head. And the bodies of Believers shall then doubtless be adorned with Hair essential to their own heads.

"FOURTHLY: We have no warrant in the word of God, that I know of, for our wearing of Perriwigs except it be in extraordinary cases. . . . Elisha did not cover his head with a Perriwig, altho' it was bald."

For the benefit of the twentieth-century reader, too little versed in the wisdom of the Old Testament, it may be noted that the reference here to the baldness of the head of the prophet Elisha is obviously based on the passage in II Kings, ii.23-24, which reads as follows: —

"And he [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

"And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them."

The wig-hating parson concludes his learned and logical exhortation with an ironic lament. "To see the greater part of Men in some congregations," he argues, "wearing Perriwigs is a matter of deep lamentation. For either all these men had a necessity to cut off their Hair, or else not. If they had a necessity to

cut off their Hair, then we have reason to take up a lamentation over the sin of our first parents which hath occasion so many Persons in one Congregation, to be sickly, weakly, crazy Persons. Oh, Adam, what has thou done!"

Even so level-headed a citizen as Judge Samuel Sewall was easily roused to a pious fury on the subject of wig-wearing. His diary describes the incident of his pouncing upon a young minister who had fallen into this foppish fashion. Says the diary: —

"Tuesday, June 10th, 1701. Having last night heard that Josiah Willard had cut off his hair (a very full head of hair) and put on a Wigg, I went to him this morning. Told his Mother what I came about, and she call'd him."

A terrible scene ensues between the righteously irate judge and the defiant young adventurer.

"I inquired of him," says the diary, "what Extremity had forced him to put off his own hair, and put on a Wigg? He answered, none at all. But said that his Hair was streight, and that it parted behinde."

Bowels of compassion must have been utterly lacking in this persecuting judge; else he would have been moved by an excuse so touching. Bad enough that the youth's "Hair was streight" — not one little curl or kink to make it alluring; yet this might have been socially endurable if only it had parted in the middle,

or at the side. But deponent testifieth that "it parted behinde"! Unsightly! Indeed, invisible until the moment of departure!

Next they entered into a heated discussion of the why and where of hair growth. This erring youth, says the diary, "Seem'd to argue that men might as well shave their hair off their head, as off their face. I answered men were men before they had hair on their faces, (half of mankind have never any). God seems to have ordained our Hair as a Test, to see whether we can bring our minds to be content to be at his finding: or whether we would be our own Carvers."

Much food for thought in this hairy discussion, though to-day it might be regarded as propaganda for Bolshevism.

"Told him," continues the diary, "that it [this hair-carving and wig-wearing] was condemned by a meeting of ministers at Northampton . . . when the said Josiah was there."

At this point the said Josiah, steeped in hirsute sin though he was, began to weaken in his stubborn resistance to godly admonition. "He seem'd to say would leave off his Wigg when his hair was grown," says the record.

Then the judge went after the negligent parents, to their evident embarrassment. They heartily approved his severity, but each tried to dodge

responsibility for the outrageous conduct of their offspring. The diary says: "I spake to his Father of it a day or two after: He thanked me that had discoursed his Son, and told me that when his hair was grown to cover his ears, he promised to leave off his Wigg. If he had known it, would have forbidden him. His Mother heard him talk of it; but was afraid positively to forbid him; lest he should do it, and so be more faulty."

An entry in Judge Sewall's diary, nearly six months later, strongly suggests double-dealing, or perhaps defiance, on the part of the young minister thus chastised. Would not his hair have "grown to cover his ears" in that length of time? Yet the accursed "Wigg" he still wore. The diary says, under date of November 30, 1701: "I spent this Sabbath at Mr. Colman's [another church, a rival of Parson Willard's] partly out of dislike to Mr. Josiah Willard's cutting off his Hair, and wearing a Wigg. . . . He that contemns the Law of Nature, is not fit to be a publisher of the Law of Grace."

However wicked in the sight of God's chosen people the ministerial wig may have been, it surely could not compare in magnitude and general fearsomeness with the contraptions built upon the heads of the contemporary coquettes. Only the resolute, not to say the stiff-necked, could support the burden and the discomfort of eighteenth-century headgear at its

worst. At the mere sight of it, some young ladies decided to enter the fray lacking this part of the armor of coquetry, though keeping it on hand for use in emergencies. A letter from Anna Green Winslow describes both the armor and the state of mind, as of 1772.

"I had my HEDDUS roll on," writes this lady. "Aunt Storer said it ought to be made less; Aunt Deming said it ought not to be made at all.

"It makes my head itch, & ach, & burn like anything, Mamma.

"This famous roll is not made wholly of a red Cow Tail, but is a mixture of that, & horsehair (very course) & a little human hair of yellow hue, that I suppose was taken out of the back part of an old wig. But D—— made it (our head) all carded together and twisted up.

"When it first came home, aunt put it on, & my cap on it; she then took up her apron & mesur'd me, & from the roots of my hair on my forehead to the top of my notions, I mesur'd above an inch longer than I did downwards from the roots of my hair to the end of my chin."

Here the young woman seems to hesitate about the regular addition of this cubit or less to her stature, and concludes with a pious platitude which seems to offer escape from fashion's martyrdom: "Nothing renders a young person more amiable," she writes,

"than virtue and modesty without the help of false hair, red Cow Tail, or D—— [the barber]."

For the late eighteenth century, this elaborate finery is not altogether astonishing. The growing surplus of wealth and leisure was sure to be spent partly in just this way, after the restraints of public disapproval and legal prohibition had been largely withdrawn. That which is surprising, however, is to find a similar devotion to finery and the latest foreign fashions a century and a quarter earlier, when, presumably, there was very little surplus and no relaxation of restraint. Probably this frivolity was not widespread, but it must have been fairly intense, if we may trust the comments upon it which were made by a contemporary named Nathaniel Ward.

Ward was a highly intelligent clergyman of Ipswich. He had studied and practised law in England, and his skill in legal matters is attested by the famous "Body of Liberties," largely drawn up by him, which Massachusetts adopted in 1641. When this lawyer-parson writes about the overdressed females of his time and region, he fairly stutters with indignation, and has to coin new polysyllables to express his scornful condemnation of their imbecilic frivolity. His point of view was, of course, strictly Puritanic, yet it must have been something akin to the spirit of present-day flapperism which stirred him to such denunciations as the following: —

"If tailors were men indeed well furnished, but with more moral principles, they would disdain to be led about like apes by such mimic marmosets. It is a most unworthy thing for men that have bones in them to spend their lives in making fiddle-cases for futilious women's fancies. . . . It is no little labor to be continually putting up English women into outlandish casks; who, if they be not shifted anew once in a few months, grow too sour for their husbands."

After protesting that he likes to see a lady well, or even smartly, gowned, he roars his disapproval of the devotees of fashion that he sees about him. "But when I hear," he continues, "a nugiperous Gentledame inquire what dress the Queen is in this week; what the mediustertian fashion of the court, — I mean the very newest: with egge to be in it in all haste, whatever it be, — I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing; fitter to be kicked, if she were of a kickable substance, than either honored or humored.

"To speak moderately, I truly confess it is beyond the ken of my understanding to conceive how those women should have any true grace or valuable virtue that have so little wit as to disfigure themselves with such exotic garbs as not only dismantles their native, lovely lustre, but transclouts them into gaunt bargeese, ill-shapen shotten shell-fish, Egyptian hiero-

glyphics, or at the best into French flirts of the pastry, which a proper English woman would scorn with her heels.

"It is no marvel they wear drails on the hinder part of their heads; having nothing, it seems, in the fore-part but a few squirrel's brains to help them frisk from one ill-favored fashion to another. . . .

"We have about five or six of them in our colony: if I see any of them accidentally, I cannot cleanse my fancy of them for a month after."

When we recall that these words were written in 1647, and that they describe conditions in the neighborhood of Boston less than a score of years after the first settlement, we must indeed conclude that the Devil had managed to sow a few tares among the wheat; or, perchance, a few wild roses among the prickly thorns!

III

FLIRTING AND COURTING

We are often told that, in the good old days when curfew was in flower, the nights were used solely for sleep, and parents never had to worry about their boys' and girls' unseemly behavior toward each other. Everybody had retired by nine o'clock. Petting parties were three centuries in the future. Flirtations were unknown, and courtship was so public and so prudent that it was difficult for the participants to keep awake. By comparison, our own dreadful times are shameful, and we are constantly urged to consider the ways of these virtuous ancestors and to imitate them.

Exceptio regulam probat is the adage which implies that, if the exceptions were too numerous, they might not only test, but even invalidate, the rule. This possibility, of course, applies to the rule of ancestral superiority in general, and the alleged coy correctness of Puritan love affairs in particular. The exceptions noted below may suggest that at least a revision of this rule is desirable.

It is not very widely known that the flirtation problem became so serious in Massachusetts, within a dozen years or so after the settlement began, that the

fathers felt constrained to pass a law for curbing the pernicious practice of unauthorized courting. The reader of these lines may have his or her doubts as to whether they are true; may even declare them a base slander against the fair fame of the grand old commonwealth and its still fairer Puritan tradition. It seems prudent, therefore, to quote in support of this astonishing statement the very words of the law which dealt with the evils that had so quickly sprung up to menace the matrimonial morals of the godly immigrants.

The statute describes these evils as follows: —

"Whereas it is a common practice in diverse places, for young men irregularly and disorderly to watch all advantages for their evil purposes, to insinuate into the affections of young maidens, by coming to them in places and seasons unknown to their parents for such ends, whereby much evil hath grown amongst us, to the dishonor of God and damage of parties."

Here we have a first-rate description, in quaint old phrases, of a somewhat notorious twentieth-century phenomenon; yet the date of the statute was 1647. It goes on to name the penalties for this popular form of wickedness: —

"For prevention whereof for time to come; It is further Ordered, That whatsoever person from henceforth, shall endeavor directly or indirectly, to draw away the affection of any maid in this jurisdic-

tion under pretence of marriage, before he hath obtained liberty and allowance from her parents or governors (or in absence of such) of the nearest magistrate, he shall forfeit for the first offence five pounds; for the second towards the party ten pounds and be bound to forbear any further attempt and proceedings in that unlawful design; And for the third offence he shall be committed to prison and upon hearing and conviction by the next Court shall be adjudged to continue in prison until the Court of Assistants shall see cause to release him."

The Connecticut situation seems to have been equally perilous. Young men there were forbidden "to inveigle or draw the affections of any maid" without the proper permission, and the law enumerates the current prohibited methods: "whether it be by speech, writing, message, company-keeping, unnecessary familiarity, disorderly night-meetings, sinful dalliance, gifts." In 1660, Jacob Minline and Sarah Tuttle of New Haven were haled to court for violating this law, and the record shows that the purpose of their unlawful meetings had by no means been prayer and fasting. "They sat down together," says the testimony, "his arm being about her, and her arm upon his shoulder or about his neck; and hee kissed her, and shee kissed him, or they kissed one another, continuing in this posture about half an hour." Moreover, Sarah denied that Jacob had "in-

veigled her affections," whereupon the court fined her instead of him, and called her a "bould virgin."

A less amusing aspect of the matter is suggested by the following quotation from Arthur W. Calhoun's *A Social History of the American Family* (volume I, page 133): —

"The cases of premarital fornication by husband and wife were evidently numerous. . . . The records of the Groton church show that of two hundred persons owning the baptismal covenant there from 1761 to 1775, no less than sixty-six confessed to fornication before marriage. From 1789 to 1791 sixteen couples were admitted to full communion; of these nine had confessed to fornication."

H. R. Stiles's work on "Bundling" throws light on these dark places. "Bundling," says the dictionary, "is lying or sleeping together or in the same bed without undressing: once a practice of lovers or of engaged couples in Wales, and in parts of New England and Pennsylvania." The *History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, Conn.*, by the H. R. Stiles above mentioned, comments on the matter thus: "Bundling — that ridiculous and pernicious custom which prevailed among the young to a degree which we can scarcely credit — sapped the fountain of morality and tarnished the escutcheons of thousands of families." Professor Charles M. Andrews describes it thus: "A curious custom was that of 'bundling' (sometimes also

A NEW

BUNDLING SONG:

Or a reproof to those young Country Women, who follow that reproachful practice, and to their Mothers for upholding them therein.

SINCE bundling very much abounds,
In many parts in country towns,
No doubt but some will spurn my song,
And say I'd better hold my tongue;
But none I'm sure will take offence;
Or deem my song impertinence,
But only those who guilty be,
And plainly here their pictures see,
And let it be in common fame,
Held up to view a noted shame.
Young miss if this your practice be,
I'll teach you now yourself to see:
You plead you're honest, modest too,
But such a plea will never do;
For how can modesty consist,
With shameful practice such as this?

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

TWENTIETH-CENTURY DISCRETION PERMITS THE REPRODUCTION OF ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE BUNDLING SONG WHICH IN THE EIGHTEENTH WAS SO INSTRUMENTAL IN BREAKING UP THE PRACTICE

called 'tarrying,' though the practices seem to have been different), which Burnaby describes as putting the courting couple into bed with garments on to prevent scandal, when 'if the parties agree, it is all very well; the banns are published and the two are married without delay.' "

"A New Bundling Song," reproduced in this volume in its less offensive parts only, seems to show that the taste of many of the early New Englanders was shockingly bad. This crudely obscene poem enjoyed a wide popularity, even down into the early nineteenth century. H. R. Stiles, in his now carefully secreted book on bundling, cited above, says of the poem: "Probably no single thing tended so much to break up the practice" of bundling "as the publication of a song, or ballad, in an almanac, about 1785. This ballad described in a free and easy style the various plans adopted by those who bundled, and rather more than hinted at the results in certain cases. Being published in an almanac, it had a much larger circulation than could have been obtained for it in any other way." It also appeared in the form of a broadside.

Courtship lost much of its dark and tempestuous character, however, when it was carried on by widows and widowers. Second, third, and fourth attempts were likely to be less passionate, as they were also more pecuniary and sometimes ingeniously argumentative. The case of the recently bereft Dr. Wiggles-

worth will illustrate, beginning with a love letter to the widow Avery, whom he is earnestly pursuing.

"Mrs. Avery and my very kind friend," he writes. "I heartily salute you in the Lord with many thanks for your kind entertainment when I was with you March 2d. I have made bold once more to visit you by a few lines in the enclosed paper."

The "enclosed paper" is a veritable brief of arguments to convince the cautious lady that the Lord God, Dr. Wigglesworth, and good business sense, all unite in urging her to become Mrs. Wigglesworth. He sees God's hand in the whole affair, because it was a case of love at first sight, or, as he puts it: —

"At first that I got a little acquaintance with you by a short and transient visit, having been altogether a stranger to you before, and that so little acquaintance should leave such impressions behind it, as neither Length of Time, distance of Place, nor any other objects would wear off, but that my thoughts and heart have been toward you ever since. . . ."

But far be it from sixty-year-old Dr. Wigglesworth to let the spirit of passionate romance usurp the leadership of piety and business prudence in this affair of the heart. He clears up that point in argument Number 3: —

"3ly . . . I have not been led hereunto by fancy (as too many are in like cases) but by sound Reason and Judgment, Principally loving and desiring you

for those gifts and graces God hath bestowed upon you, and propounding the Glory of God, the adorning and furtherance of the Gospel. The spiritual as well as outward good of myself and family, together with the good of yourself and children [are the] Ends inducing me hereunto. . . ."

Arguments 6 and 10, relating to business cares and personal health, are expressed thus: —

"6ly. Consider, if you should continue where you are whether the looking after and managing of your outward business and affairs may not be too hard for you, and hazzard your health again? . . .

"10ly. As my late wife was a means under God of my recovering a better state of health; so who knows but God may make you instrumental to preserve and prolong my health and life to do him service. . . . And for the other objection from the number of my children and difficulty of guiding such a family: 1st, the number may be lessened if there be need of it." By assassination, perhaps; though Dr. Wigglesworth does not specify the method by which he will lessen the number of his children, if requested thereto.

That it was by no means impossible, nevertheless, for a repeater in matrimony to be dangerously sudden in his reëntrance, is shown by the manner of Governor Richard Bellingham's capture of his second wife. She was twenty years old; he fifty years young.

Moreover, she was "ready to be contracted to a friend of Bellingham's, who lodged in his house, and by his consent had proceeded so far with her." Then faith and friendship seem to have been cast to the winds, "when on the sudden, the Governor treated with her and obtained her for himself," even exercising his authority as a magistrate to perform his own marriage ceremony. Their married life seems to have been as happy as most, however, and after his death she remained a widow during her remaining thirty years; a remarkably long time, by current standards, for abstaining from re-matrimony.

A certain surprising carelessness about wedding ceremonies, or even lack of any, seems to have been tolerated sometimes. Thus Calhoun (quoted above) relates the story of a New London scapegrace who insisted on taking up with a woman and making her his wife without ceremony. The affair was a scandal in the community. A magistrate, meeting the couple on the street, accosted them thus: —

"John Rogers, do you persist in calling this woman, a servant, so much younger than yourself, your wife?"

"Yes, I do," retorted John.

"And do you, Mary," continued the magistrate gruffly, "wish such an old man as this to be your husband?"

"Indeed I do," she replied firmly.

"Then, by the laws of God and this common-

wealth," was the disconcerting response, "I, as a magistrate, pronounce you man and wife."

Where due form and ceremony were observed by the parties, however, their path to matrimony was rarely blocked. If the young man's intentions were serious and honorable, and if the girl favored him, parents who forbade the courting were likely to be haled before the magistrates to show cause for thus thwarting their children's affections. A statute of 1641 says: "If any person shall wilfully and unreasonably deny any child timely or convenient marriage or shall exercise any unnatural severity towards them; such children shall have liberty to complain to authority for redress in such cases." Complaints under this law were actually made by determined young lovers. Thus, in 1646, "Richard Taylor complained to the general Court of Plymouth that he was prevented from marrying Ruth Wheildon by her father Gabriel." When this inconsiderate father was brought before the court, he "yielded and promised no longer to oppose the marriage."

Breach of promise to marry was a serious offense, then as now, but "heart balm" seems to have been considerably less expensive in the olden days. The Massachusetts colony records show, for instance, that the court "orders that Joyce Bradwicke shall give unto Alex. Becke the sum of twenty shillings, for promiseing him marriage and nowe refuseing to performe

the same." Sometimes prices were higher, however, as in the case mentioned in the Plymouth colony records where Dinah Silvester and her father sue John Palmer "to recover twenty pounds and costs, for acteing fraudulently against the said Dinah, in not performing his engagement to her in point of marriage." In 1735, a woman was awarded two hundred pounds and costs against the young man who had deserted her and married another girl, but one reason why the penalty was so large in this case is that the wily wooer had first beguiled the jilted one into deeding him a piece of land worth a hundred pounds.

After the marriage knot was once actually tied, it rarely slipped. Divorce was distinctly not in fashion in those early days, but sometimes the matrimonial triangle, or even a sort of domestic polygon, took its place, with one or more admirers competing with the husband for his wife's affections. A striking illustration of this unhappy matrimonial geometry, which failed, nevertheless, to untie the wedding knot, is the case of Samuel Sewall, Junior, son of the famous chief justice of Massachusetts, and Rebecca Dudley, daughter of Governor Joseph Dudley, of that commonwealth. How often this sort of thing occurred in Boston in those early days of more than two hundred years ago it is impossible to state with certainty. The facts of this particular case, however, are given rather fully in the valuable and trustworthy diary kept by

Samuel Sewall, Senior, the eminent father of the unfortunate young husband.

According to this diary, the wife, who was the daughter of Governor Joseph Dudley and the granddaughter of Governor Thomas Dudley, behaved herself well enough at least to escape public notice for the first ten years of her married life, and had borne to her husband five children, before she began to flap and flutter in a breeze of scandal. A certain William Ilsley, of Newbury, apparently looking for a job as "soul-mate," found it at the house of the fractious Rebecca Dudley Sewall. It was really her house, rather than her husband's, for Samuel Sewall, Junior, seems to have been too meek to resist her demands or to resent Ilsley's intrusion. The three angles in this unholy triangle are clearly shown in the following passage from Father Sewall's diary, under date of October 30, 1713: —

"Sam and his Wife dine here [on a visit to the old folks].

"They go home together in the Calash [ancestor to the now defunct horse and buggy].

"William Ilsley rode and passed by them. My son warned him not to lodge at his house. Daughter [the terrible Rebecca] said she had as much to do with the house as he.

"Ilsley lodged there.

"Sam grew so ill on Satterday that he was fain to

take his Horse and come hither, to the surprise of his Mother, who was at home.

"Lord save him and us," concludes the poor old father, shocked and grieved almost to despair at such goings-on.

It is impossible to read Judge Sewall's account of this miserable affair without feeling both pity and admiration for him. He behaved better than any of the others concerned. His wife, Mother Sewall, was very harsh in her interviews with the erring Rebecca; and Rebecca's parents, Governor and Mrs. Dudley, tried to put all the blame on their daughter's husband; but the old Judge listened to both sides peaceably and kept trying to accomplish a reconciliation.

"While I was absent, my Wife and Daughter Sewall [Rebecca] had very sharp discourse," he writes. Later, when he visited his daughter-in-law's parents, they loaded the blame for all the domestic trouble upon the husband of their daughter. "The Governor and Madam Dudley both," says the Judge's diary, "reckoned up the Offenses of my son; and He the Vertues of his Daughter."

Soon after this, however, an event occurred which caused the Dudleys to stop talking about the virtues of their daughter. On December 19, 1716, she gave birth to a son, though she had not lived with her husband since January 1715.

Judge Sewall pretty nearly gave up when this

blow fell, though only a little time before he had sent his daughter-in-law ten pounds with which to buy clothes. The Dudleys changed their tone, and came to plead for their humiliated Rebecca. "Governor Dudley," says the diary, describing a subsequent interview, "mentioned Christ's pardoning Mary Magdalen." The Governor also urged that "God hates putting away" a wife, but Sewall was not impressed with this belated straining of mercy from the Scriptures. He replied: "I said my Son had all along insisted that the infant lately born should not be chargeable to his Estate." Governor Dudley said that "Nobody knew whose 't was."

A few months later, the haughty and wanton Rebecca herself came pleading for forgiveness and a reconciliation. Probably it was lucky for her that the quite unreconciled Mother-in-law Sewall died very shortly afterward. Her death removed a righteously indignant antagonist. Moreover, grief at the loss of his beloved helpmate no doubt softened the old Judge's heart again. At any rate, he and his much-abused son proceeded to take advice on the matter of building up once more the wrecked home. The Reverend Mr. Walter, whom they consulted, and who had, nearly sixteen years before, joined in marriage the ill-mated pair, advised that the husband return to his wife. The businesslike way in which they shortly afterward went about this reconstruction of the shat-

tered domestic relations is shown in the following extract from the diary: —

"My Son Samuel Sewall and his Wife Sign and Seal the Writings in order to my Son's going home. Governor Dudley took me into the Old Hall and gave me a hundred pounds in Three-pound bills of credit, new ones, for my Son."

Whether this payment of five hundred dollars was "heart balm," a second dowry, or hush money, it seems to have served as the financial foundation for a rescued home. So far as further entries in the diary show, the reunited couple "lived happily ever after," the prodigal wife evidencing her true repentance by bearing two more sons for her restored husband. Evidently she recovered her good standing in the church, for her father-in-law had occasion to rebuke her some years afterward for partaking of the Lord's Supper without removing her gloves.

Requiescant in pace, all those Puritan saints and sinners, who loved, and courted, and flirted, in such ways as seemed to them good, or bad. Their frailties are easily forgivable by their present posterity, who may, after all, safely venture to claim a certain spiritual kinship with their revered New England ancestors.

IV

THE COURTSHIPS OF WIDOWHOOD

SOMEONE has said that New Englanders of the seventeenth century got along very well without divorce because they were so promptly widowed. A short life and a married one, was the rule, and domestic infelicity was tolerable when it did not last too long. In that Calvinistic age, it was predestination rather than free will which regulated the term of the matrimonial bond, and the parties thereto specialized in watchful waiting instead of open revolt.

Perhaps this explanation is no more than a flippant fancy. The widows and widowers, however, were very numerous, and they did show an all but universal tendency toward remarriage, even unto the third and fourth repetition of that adventure. How they went about the courting of their sequential mates is well illustrated by the experiences of Judge Samuel Sewall, related in considerable detail in his invaluable diary. His courtships number at least six; his wives only three, the last of whom survived him. His first, and normal, matrimonial career, covering the remarkably long period of more than twoscore years, was ended by the death of his genuinely beloved wife

("a most constant lover and a most laborious nurse," he called her), after she had borne him fourteen children. He was then sixty-five years of age, but by no means through with matrimony. No less than five courtships decorated the remaining thirteen years of his active life. For the orientation of the reader, a brief catalogue of the Judge's later hopes may be useful: —

1. Mrs. Denison (courtship wrecked by financial disagreement).
2. Mrs. Tilly (became his second wife, but died within a year).
3. Madam Winthrop (courtship wrecked by mutual perversity).
4. Mrs. Ruggles (she refused to be courted).
5. Mrs. Gibbs (became his third wife, and last, in this world).

Exactly five months after the death of his first wife, Judge Sewall was called upon to draw up the last will and testament of one William Denison. Seven days later he attended this gentleman's funeral, at the conclusion of which his thoughts seem to have turned in tender sympathy toward the comely widow. "At coming away [from the funeral]," he says in his diary, "I prayed God to keep house with the widow." Shortly afterward, however, he decides to relieve God of that rather pleasant task.

By June he was making progress. "Go to Roxbury,"

says the diary; "talk with Mr. Walter [his pastor] about Mrs. Denison. He advises me not to see her then, lest should surprise her undressed. Told him I came on purpose; yet finally submitted to his advice." Then come numerous meetings between these amorous ancients, in the course of which financial disagreements develop that shatter love's old dream and lead the Judge to conclude with this pious remark, to his diary: "My bowels yearn towards Mrs. Denison; but I think God directs me in his Providence to desist."

The "desist" had relation, of course, to Mrs. Denison; not to matrimony in general. Only a few months later we find him nearing the conclusion of another alliance, but this time he was dealing with a lady far too meek to wrangle with him over financial settlements.

"Visit Mrs. Tilly," says the diary, "and speak with her in her Chamber; ask her to come and dwell at my house. She expresses her Unworthiness of such a thing with much Respect." After a beginning so auspicious, matters proceed briskly toward the happy event: —

"September 16. After the Meeting I visited Mrs. Tilly.

"September 18. ditto."

And so on for more than a week, with absolutely nothing in the diary but visits to the bride-apparent.

"September 21. I gave Mrs. Tilly a little booke

entitled Ornaments for the daughters of Sion. I gave it to my dear Wife August 28, 1702." This last fact was probably recorded on the book's flyleaf, in pencil rather than in ink, we hope; though, of course, the Judge may have been seeking, without any concealment, to establish a pretty little tradition of giving this particular volume to each of his several wives, as they might succeed each other. At any rate, the book was only seventeen years old, and no doubt well preserved; and Judge Sewall, though generous, was never wasteful in his expenditures.

The second installment of Samuel Sewall's married life was happy but brief. It lasted less than seven months. The death of this second helpmate left him, at the advanced age of sixty-eight, face to face with the alternatives of continuing widowhood or at least one more courtship. By every modern standard, this doubly experienced Puritan widower might have been expected to cry "Enough!" against further incitements to matrimony, and to settle down to a non-contentious and self-directed old age. That he did not do so is yet another, of many, proofs that the early New Englanders were a fearless and sturdy race, to whom hardship and the stress of conflict were the very breath of life.

The middle Mrs. Sewall, so easily won and lost, had vacated her marital position on May 26, 1720. The bereft Judge tottered along through the summer

with only the memory of his two deceased wives to lean upon, but by early fall he seemed to feel again the need for more vital support. In his diary we note, under date of September 5, the flicker of a reviving hope: "Going to Son Sewall's," he writes, "I there meet with Madam Winthrop, told her I was glad to meet her there, had not seen her a great while, gave her Mr. Homes's Sermon." Doubtless Madam Winthrop, who had a matrimonial past of her own (aged fifty-six, twice widowed, mother of twelve children), was by no means unaware of the sweetly sentimental significance of the gift of "Mr. Homes's Sermon."

From this time forth for as much as two months Madam Winthrop romps about in the Judge's diary as though she owned it, and him. Indeed, during October and the first ten days of November, one might say, though speaking with the most guarded moderation, that the Judge was "rushing" her. Items follow: —

"8r. [October] 1. Satterday, I dine at Mr. Stoddard's: from thence I went to Madam Winthrop's just at 3. Spake to her, saying, my loving wife died so soon and suddenly, 't was hardly convenient for me to think of Marrying again; however I came to this Resolution: that I would not make my Court to any person without first consulting with her. . . ."

We can almost see the sixty-eight-year-old blush

on Judge Sewall's eager face as he thus permits his tender thoughts to rush forth prematurely. It is only two days after this preliminary feint, however, when he begins his campaign, by a surprise attack.

"October 3. Waited on Madam Winthrop again. . . . At last I prayed that Katharine [alias Madam Winthrop] might be the person assign'd for me. She instantly took it up in the way of Denyal as if she had catch'd at an Opportunity to do it, saying she could not do it before she was asked. Said that was her mind unless she should Change it, which she believed she should not; could not leave her Children. I express'd my sorrow that she should do it so Speedily, pray'd her Consideration; and ask'd her when I should wait on her agen. She setting no time, I mention'd that day Sennight. . . ."

Judge Sewall did not even await the appointed "day Sennight." His diary shows him back again and forcing the fight on Thursday of the same week: —

"8r. 6th. A little after 6 p.m. I went to Madam Winthrop's. . . . Madam seemed to harp upon the same string. Must take care of her Children; could not leave that House and neighborhood where she had dwelt so long." The Judge demolished this barricade with ease: "I told her she might doe her children as much or more good by bestowing what she laid out in Houskeeping, upon them." Then, executing an

encircling movement (purely figurative), he attacked her position on three sides at once: (1) "I gave her a piece of Mr. Belcher's Cake and Gingerbread wrapped up in a clean sheet of paper." This might be denominated the gastronomic-æsthetic argument: the contemporary Page and Shaw confection and the clean wrapping. As will more appear anon, the Judge was a bit of a stickler for cleanliness. (2) "Told her of her Father's kindness to me when Treasurer, and I constable. My daughter Judith was gon from me and I was more lonesom. . . ." Here the double-filial motive is brought into play. His daughter had abdicated from any possible claim to rule his household; and the Window Winthrop's deceased father would doubtless approve, could he be consulted, her alliance with his sometime esteemed Constable. (3) "Might help to forward one another in our journey to Canaan. . . ." Had Samuel Sewall been fully master of his tumultuous emotions, we trust he would have given this argument precedence over that of the Cake and Gingerbread!

These passionate persuadings seem to have achieved at least a moratorium on the "Denyal." Of the following Monday evening we read: "I visited Madam Winthrop, who treated me with a great deal of Curtesy: Wine, Marmalade." The next day: "I writ a few lines to Madam Winthrop to this purpose: 'Madam, These wait on you with Mr. Mayhew's Ser-

mon; and Account of the state of the Indians on Martha's Vineyard. I thank you for your Unmerited Favours of yesterday; and hope to have the Happiness of Waiting on you to-morrow before Eight a-clock after Noon. . . ."

At this point the task of the faithful historian becomes painfully embarrassing. He is dealing with the reputation of a Massachusetts chief justice, a man so notorious for probity, austerity, and discretion that to record of him any departures therefrom is to risk being instantly branded as both malicious and mendacious. In these circumstances, one would most certainly prefer to interpret the words "Unmerited Favours of yesterday" as meaning no more than "Curtesy; Wine, Marmalade"; but, alas, the unmistakable language of the Judge's own diary compels us to believe that probably on the evening of Monday, October 10, 1720, and certainly on the evening of Wednesday, the twelfth, he was a participant in what might now conceivably be termed a "petting party"! With a certain shameless frankness he records the encounters in the following words: —

"8r. 12 . . . Mrs. Anne Cotton came to door . . . said Madam Winthrop was within, directed me into the little Room, where she was full of work behind a Stand; Mrs. Cotton came in and stood. Madam Winthrop pointed to her to set me a Chair. Madam Winthrop's countenance was much changed

from what 't was on Monday, look'd dark and lowering. . . . I got my Chair in place, had some Converse, but very cold and indifferent to what 't was before. Ask'd her to acquit me of Rudeness if I drew off her Glove. Enquiring the Reason, I told her it was great odds between handling a dead Goat and a living Lady. Got it off. I told her I had one Petition to ask of her, that was, that she would take off the Negative she laid on me the third of October; She readily answered she could not, and enlarg'd upon it. . . . I gave her Dr. Preston, The Church's Marriage and the Church's Carriage, which cost me 6s at the Sale. . . . Told her the reason why I came every other [instead of every] night was lest I should drink too deep draughts of Pleasure. She had talked of Canary, her kisses were to me better than the best Canary. . . ."

Gentle reader, you shall not again be so rudely shocked during the rest of this veracious narrative. The raging tide of septuagenarian passion has here reached its flood. Henceforth it slowly recedes, uncovering the cold and snaily sands of disillusionment and financial settlements.

Love's astigmatism was soon reduced. It was only five days after the "Canary . . . kisses" outburst that the Judge's critical glances discerned a flaw in his fair one's perfection. "In the Evening, I visited Madam Winthrop," he writes, "who treated me

Courteously, but not in Clean Linen as sometimes. . . ." Within the next two days the lovers had slid down to the following altogether mundane level, where it is hard to distinguish Cupid from cupidity: "Midweek, Visited Madam Winthrop. . . . Was Courteous to me; but took occasion to speak pretty earnestly about my keeping a Coach: I said 't would cost 100 pounds per annum: she said 't would cost but 40 pounds. . . ."

Now and then, to be sure, a little vampirian strategy raises the temperature again for a brief moment. Thus, while the negotiatory wooing proceeded next day, "After a while [I] prayed the favour to speak with her. She took one of the Candles, and went into the best Room, clos'd the Shutters, sat down upon the Couch." But even this pretty little love scene is straightway daubed with drab by the lady's next remark: "She told me," writes the diarist, "that Madam Usher had been there, and said the Coach must be set on Wheels, and not by Rusting. She spake something of my needing a Wigg. . . ." And yet the Judge seemed to like his romance flavored with such realism. He said, "I shall keep you in the Cold, and asked her if she would be within tomorrow night, for we had had but a running Feat." One wonders whether "running Feat" was a colloquialism, and regrets its loss from the technical vocabulary of to-day.

Judge Sewall regularly recovered his gravity and poise as soon as he got safely out of the widow's magnetic field; nor was he a man to be trifled with indefinitely, as Madam Winthrop was soon to discover. The next day, however, he renewed the campaign in deadly earnest. "My son, the Minister," he writes, "came to me by appointment and we pray one for another . . . more especially respecting my Courtship. About 6. a-clock I go to Madam Winthrop's . . . having Dr. Sibb's Bowels with me to read." (The title of this edifying book sounds less autopsical when given in full: *Bowels Opened; or a Discovery of the Union between Christ and the Church.*) The Judge had to read it for more than three hours before the tantalizing widow returned home from a call; and even then she showed herself still perverse and elusive. "I mentioned something of the lateness," he says; "she bantered me. . . . I asked when our proceedings should be made publick: She said they were like to be no more publick than they were already."

Three days later he tried it again, but could get no more encouraging reply than "Not yet." Then, after waiting more than a week, he "went again. . . . Gave her about ½ pound of Sugar Almonds, cost 3s per pound. . . . She seemed pleased with them, ask'd what they cost. Spake of giving her a Hundred pounds per annum if I dy'd before her. Ask'd what

sum she would give me, if she should Dy first?" But she continued to refuse these soft persuadings, so he soon afterward gave her up; and in the final scene of parting we find him cruelly critical in taking leave of his lost love: "I did not bid her draw off her Glove as sometime I had done," he writes. "Her dress was not so clean as sometime it had been. Jehovah jireh!" One suspects that these last two words, as here employed, were more profane even than they look.

Henceforth the ardor of romance seems almost wholly absent from the Judge's continuing search for a third consort. After several months he knocked at the heart's door of one Madam Ruggles, but she kept that seasoned barrier firmly bolted. He says she even "made some difficulty to accept an Election Sermon, lest it should be an obligation on her." Very different, however, was his success in pursuit of his next and, as the event proved, his final quarry, "Mrs. Mary Gibbs, Widow." (The diary introduces her as both "Mrs." and "Widow," thus disarming at once any suspicion that the Judge was involving himself in a matrimonial triangle.) Mrs. Gibbs haggled a bit over the financial proposals of her suitor; but once these matters were agreed upon, it required further the gift of only "a pound of Glaz'd Almonds, and a Duz. Meers Cakes, Two bottles of Canary. . . . Mr. Mitchel's Sermons of Glory . . . [and] an Orange" to com-

plete the Conquest. Its triumphant conclusion is recorded by Judge Sewall in the following words: "March 29th [1722], Samuel Sewall and Mrs. Mary Gibbs were joined together in marriage by the Revd. Mr. William Cooper."

The *pièce de résistance* of Widower Sewall's matrimonial menu was, undoubtedly, the capriciously affectionate but unsubmissive Madam Winthrop. He never lost interest in her, and at her funeral he helped carry the mortal remains, remarking tenderly in his diary, "She will be much miss'd." Though his heart was wounded, his digestion nevertheless remained sound. The diary records that, on his way home from her funeral, he made a wedding call, and was regaled with "good Bride-Cake, good Wine, Burgundy and Canary, good Beer, Oranges, Pears."

In looking back over these courtships of widowhood, we must acknowledge our debt to Judge Sewall's admirable diary. The mystery of "the ways of a man with a maid" may be still unrevealed, but this diary makes us tolerably familiar with the ways of a widower with a widow in the early days of New England.

V

COURTING COTTON MATHER[1]

A Story

It was not decent. More than likely it was of the Devil, this unholy passion of hers; but she gazed, nevertheless, in godless rapture at the great man.

All around her the sorrowing congregation looked even more gloomy than Sabbath worship required, in hard-faced sympathy with their leader's affliction. God had smitten him, and they were touched. Faces habitually stern now softened a little as they beheld the great preacher's hard-won triumph over the sobs that sought to escape from his heart into his voice. God's will be done. He doeth all things well; but, by the judgment of frail and faulty human sight, He doeth some things better than others. Only last Tuesday He had sent His messenger of death into the pastor's home and called away the good man's "Lovely Consort," the wife of his young manhood and the mother of his nine children. The people of God, assembled for worship and praise on the very next day after the Saturday funeral, showed resignation, indeed, but no enthusiasm regarding this latest performance of Him who moves in a mysterious way,

[1] This narrative goes beyond, but never counter to, the recorded facts.

and offers no explanations. The stricken minister was struggling heroically through an appropriate sermon on the death of the prophet Ezekiel's wife, and the women members of his flock were taking little pains to check or to conceal their tears of a shared grief.

But the eyes of Prudence Prynne — so to call her — showed no tears. Rather were they shining with the great happiness she found it hard to hide and impossible to suppress; and, very evidently, the source of this untimely joy was none other than the grief-smitten preacher, the Reverend Cotton Mather. The girl must be bewitched! This eminent widower was still quivering with the very freshness of his anguish; while in his home, making of his famous library a pest ward, were several of his motherless children, "fallen sick of a Loathsome Disease" called smallpox. Yet Prudence Prynne, well knowing all these afflictions, continued to betray the gladness of her heart to any who might so much as glance at her flushed cheeks and love-lit eyes; eyes that never turned from speaking silently her tender hopes toward the suffering occupant of the sacred desk.

In all that crowded church, one person saw this scandalously premature outpouring of an unsuspected, unrequited love.

She saw, and understood.

"Prudence," she whispered, "you must not. It is wicked!"

"Yes, Mother, I must," she answered, seemingly careless of who might hear. "God Himself is Love, and my love is of God. It is holy."

"Sh! You will be heard. The Devil is deceiving you. It cannot be holy, not yet; not so soon."

As the service came to an end, the elders of the congregation, men and women alike, pressed about the suffering servant of the Lord with words and tears of sympathy. Modesty restrained the younger members. Prudence Prynne, who was barely twenty-three, might not have dared to venture had she not persuaded, no, compelled her trembling mother to avoid a scene by leading her to the place where the holy man was standing.

"His grace is sufficient, Sister Prynne," Cotton Mather was saying bravely to the older woman.

"The Lord will surely bring you comfort and deliverance, Mr. Mather," she replied earnestly.

Then, as Prudence came before him and clasped his hand, his eyes dimmed with tears, as though the sympathy of youth and mortal loveliness had somehow pierced the armor of his resignation and opened a fresh wound in his very human heart.

"The Lord bless you, Prudence," he murmured, in breaking voice.

She clung to his hand, speechless. A sudden rush of tears gave warning of a tenderness beyond control. And, next, an act of madness! Bowing quickly,

she kissed the hand she was still clasping; then hastened blindly away.

Some who beheld were shocked and sternly disapproving; but the man of God, as he walked sorrowfully back to his desolated home, found his thoughts, amid the surging of holier emotions, turning oddly for a moment to that sudden kiss, and the shadow of a doubt arose about its heavenly character.

Disturbed by this unholy possibility, he hastened into his study, where he was wont to wrestle mightily in prayer concerning all the many perils to his soul that the Devil was ever busy a-preparing. The sight there of beds and medicines and nurse and suffering children reminded him that he had given over this room of soul's retreat to be used as a domestic hospital; but, once entered, he must needs stay and pray for the return of all to health. Though the oldest of these children was not yet ten, they often sought their father's prayers. "The Little Creatures," he wrote that night in his famous diary, "keep calling for me so often to pray with them that I can scarce do it less than ten or a dozen times in a day."

This sacred duty tenderly performed, for Cotton Mather dearly loved his offspring, he retired to his bedroom to bombard Heaven with petitions hardly fit for infants' ears. Was it indeed the kiss of peace that comely Prudence Prynne had given him? That he could give it any carnal meaning merely showed

the desperate efforts of unresting Satan to play upon the deep depravity of Mather's human heart. Now was the time when his great enemy would find him weakest. How many a pious man had proved unable to endure the temptations of a widower! He would fight that matter out at once with an indignant but ever-merciful God. He would straightway prostrate himself in the very dust, and clamor for death itself rather than that he be allowed to bring any reproach upon the fame of true religion.

He entered his bedchamber and closed the door. Down on his knees, bowing his head to the floor, he cried his fears and his challenge unto the Almighty. Evidently the Almighty took notice, for an answer came, sudden and alarming.

"Most merciful and most just God," he began, "I know how frequently and how foolishly widowers miscarry, and by their miscarriages dishonor Thee. With tears I beseech Thee for this precious blessing and favor: that Thou wilt here and now kill me, rather than leave me unto anything that might bring any remarkable dishonor upon Thy Holy Name."

A sharp pain shot through the kneeling man's heart! He had ceased to breathe, and seemed relaxing from devotion into sudden death. Fainting, he did not flinch from the bargain he had just proposed, though he did feel a measure of surprise hardly warranted by the robust faith he always professed. This,

then, must be the lesser evil. The All-Foreseeing One was granting him a speedy deliverance from temptations that he would not have borne with credit to the holy cause. He remembered the terrible struggles of his younger manhood and approved the wisdom of Omniscience. No doubt it were better that he die at once.

Oh, dreadful anticlimax! Anon he felt better, and was soon fully recovered. He had failed to distinguish between a stroke of divine power and an attack of acute indigestion. He must take up again his lonely vigil against the miscarriages to which newly made widowers are so lamentably prone.

Quite other were the musings of her who had stirred these agonizing doubts. As she wandered hesitatingly away from the house of worship, the thoughts of the enraptured Prudence sorely belied her name. Her anxious mother's urgings were all that restrained love's impatience from rushing in where grief must long hold sway; and it was no unwillingness to violate the proprieties, or even the sanctities, that held her to somewhat of moderation. It was rather, as her mother shrewdly pointed out, the likelihood that she might estrange, instead of winning, the affections of the man she loved, which led her to defer a little the full avowal that burned to rush forth and kindle a response.

This Boston maiden of two centuries ago did not

altogether belong where fate had placed her. Such errors do occur from time to time. God will not tell us why; but a worldly-wise guess might suggest that the cake of custom is saved from utter soddenness by these occasional misplacements of human leaven, and that the bitter trials which so often ensue are but the healthful, yeasty fermentation needed to make life somewhat digestible.

Prudence had long been a healthful ferment. The Puritan community of Boston needed her leavening lightness, but was sternly unconscious of that need. Happily her own parents were not quite so obtusely righteous. Probably she had inherited directly from them her disturbing, nonconformist tendencies. At any rate, they had a lively task in keeping her out of the mischief toward which her exploring and assertive young mind seemed constantly to be running; but, contrary to what one might expect of anybody else, the older Prudence became, the more difficult grew the problem of steering her away from, or pulling her out of, trouble.

At the age of ten she had established a reputation for little journeys to the most improbable and improper places. Whenever she could not be found in her home, and that was regrettably often, her mother would instantly try to think of the one place where it were the most dangerous or unseemly, or both, for her daughter to be, and, searching in that dreadful

place, would usually find this eager little investigator of all the strange and forbidden things which seemed to fill the world.

It was while she was engaged in one of these explorations that she first became interested in the famous Cotton Mather — himself an intrepid explorer of strange and forbidden things in the field of witchcraft. Prudence Prynne and her mother were on a short visit with friends in Salem Village, notwithstanding the deadly perils of the witch hunt then at its height, during that tragic summer of 1692. On the nineteenth of August, five condemned victims were to be hanged. Prudence had reached the mature age of twelve years, yet she had never seen even one human being hanged. Unhappily her earnest efforts to add this coveted experience to her education had been thwarted heretofore by the vigilance of inconsiderate parents; but this time she would be more crafty, and, she ventured to hope, more successful. Her hope was realized.

The spectacle of this day was peculiarly instructive to a youthful mind. One of the condemned was a person of some distinction, the Reverend George Burroughs, a graduate of Harvard College, and for nearly a score of years a minister of the Gospel. When it came his turn to die, he was generously allowed to speak to the assembled throng, but this gracious permission he abused in dangerous fashion.

Instead of bearing witness to the justice of his condemnation, he stoutly denied it, using words so reasonable and so eloquent that he persuaded many of his hearers to tears of resentment and almost to violent interference for his rescue from the blind righteousness of his judges' decree. He even prayed the Lord's Prayer through without a mistake, a thing that no real witch was supposed to be able to do; but this was at once explained away by those present whom he had bewitched: they swore they saw the Devil himself standing by and dictating every word the accused uttered.

Little Prudence Prynne had wriggled through the crowd and was standing in the innermost circle. Every syllable of the victim's moving argument she heard and felt. When, at the end, he clinched his defense by passing the Lord's Prayer test, she was horribly certain of his innocence and fiercely resolved to prevent his hanging. So she prayed to God for his deliverance.

Before the prayer could be answered, however, the Reverend Cotton Mather stepped forward and took a part in the proceedings. He did n't exactly step, for he was mounted on a large bay horse, and could thus be more readily seen and heard in that dense crowd. Almost everybody knew who he was; knew that he was an ardent supporter of the judges in their cruel efforts to rid the land of witches; but

at this moment the mob were in no mood to listen to his words. It required courage to confront their wrathful uncertainty, but the mighty preacher's voice was calm and commanding. He made a very splendid figure, Prudence thought, though she was sure he would be unable to convince either God or her of the convicted man's guilt; but he did, nevertheless, put a new light on the whole matter. He explained, first, that this man was really no ordained minister at all; and then he showed that one of the favorite tricks of the Devil was to make his wicked servants talk and act exactly like the holiest angels of Heaven. Gradually he quieted the restless insubordination of his hearers, and the execution was allowed to proceed. The little girl in the front row was completely converted to the justice of the hanging, but she did n't after all stay to witness it. She fully intended to do so, but when the body dropped and the noose tightened, sudden terror made her heart stop ticking and her stomach turn a somersault. Back through the fascinated, staring assemblage she wriggled, like a little, hastening eel; then ran madly home without a pause or a look behind. Breathless and tearful she threw herself, sobbing, on her bed.

After this great experience, whenever she sat with her mother and father in the Old North Church, its preacher could never be wholly dissociated from that

splendid, fearless man on horseback who had stilled and swayed the angry Salem mob. No longer was he, for her, merely the learned Cotton Mather, author of countless books and sermons, preëminent for godliness and leadership, statesman and saint. He was a dashing cavalier, a crusading knight, a hero loved of God and men; loved also, she feared, of many women in his congregation, potentially at least, but in perfect restraint and with no thought of wickedness. Though he was more than fifteen years her senior, and happily married, with numerous and increasing family, she allowed her girlish dreams to fashion his life in a different setting. Very gradually, almost imperceptibly, these dreamy might-have-beens changed into may-bes. All things are possible with youth, and here its magic touch transformed regrets and longings into hopes — hopes that for Prudence were at first forlorn, then crescent, and at last serene; sustained and nourished by a somewhat godless, fatalistic faith that dreams so beautiful must come true.

The mortal illness of the late Mrs. Mather had, therefore, been viewed by Prudence with conflicting emotions; but the conflict was altogether one-sided. From its beginning, the proper Christian feeling in the matter had no chance against her own private, selfish hopes. She did try to justify her hard-heartedness by considering the suffering woman's admirable fitness for a triumphant entrance into

Heaven, and obvious unfitness for taking up again the cares and labors of the constantly increasing Mather household; but Prudence found little satisfaction in this whitewashing of the soiled corners in her sinful heart. She was clumsy at it, lacking practice. The withering scorn she had always felt toward this sort of casuistical camouflage when others attempted it now scorched her conscience into a shocking sincerity.

"I really want her to die," she told her sympathetic but horrified mother. "She must die sometime. If that sometime is now, I shall have the opportunity I have hoped for so long — an opportunity to share intimately in the life of the wisest, holiest, mightiest man in all these American colonies. It would transform my life into something bigger and purer than your best thought of me, Mother; and I just know I could rise to become a true helpmate to him. He is always so close to Heaven that he needs someone to keep him mindful also of this world and its unsinful beauty."

"Prudence, how shocking it would seem to anyone who heard you talk like this," began her mother, hesitatingly.

"Shocking because they are unused to speaking, or even thinking, what is the truth," she replied sharply. "I shall never stop being grateful to you and to Father that you have encouraged me always to be

more honest than the fashion. But, Mother," she added suddenly, "I am afraid I am not being altogether honest with you even now. I talk of desiring to be the wife of Cotton Mather in order that I may make my life and his more holy, yet that is only the lesser reason. The one sufficient reason, outweighing all the rest, is that I love him; and I know the very greatness of his love for God is but a measure and a promise of the tender, human love that he soon may have for me."

These last words seemed to bear somewhat the weight of prophecy when next day the news came that almost as they were being uttered the beloved wife of Cotton Mather had departed this life.

Early in February of the year of our Lord 1702–1703 (New Year's Day used to occur in March instead of in January), the Reverend Cotton Mather was in his study, engaged in pious combat with the Almighty, by prayer and fasting, that he, a miserable sinner, might be vouchsafed enough of divine grace to behave himself correctly amid the sly and seductive temptations which so notoriously beset the melancholy path of the widower. Also he was looking for some heavenly illumination on that perennial problem of widowhood: To wed, or not to wed? Sometimes he thought 'twere better that he remain desolate, wedded only unto the high calling of his church leadership. His father and friends, however,

urged him to marry again: he was scarcely forty years of age and had begotten only nine children, of whom but four were living. The cares of his household and the acknowledged frailty of his human flesh both pointed the desirability of a second marriage. He besought the Lord for sure guidance, and a prompt response came: a knock at his study door, and a message thrust into his hand. Was this, indeed, an answer to his prayer, or was it, perchance, a ruse of the "Divel"?

He opened the message with reverent curiosity and began to read. The reading soon brought a slight flush to his somewhat pallid cheek and the suggestion of a sparkle to his heavy-lidded eyes. He read, then reread, the letter, pacing up and down the long room with a restless eagerness which was oddly unlike his earlier demeanor.

"A young gentlewoman of incomparable accomplishments," he muttered to himself; "no gentlewoman in the English America has had a more polite education. She is one of rare wit and sense, withal, and of a comely aspect; and extremely winning in her conversation, I do now recall."

He walked slowly over to the window and stared with totally unseeing eyes upon the cheerless, snow-swept garden; then, turning, strode back and knelt before the glowing log that all but filled the great fireplace. Knelt more from habit than intention, as

though about to worship some heathen god of fire. No prayer arose, nor any thought of prayer. Instead, a smile softened the face so often stern and sad; a smile that seemed to radiate an unsuspected warmth of tenderness.

"That kiss," he murmured, "was what I feared it might be."

Once more he reread the letter, this time half aloud, or rather in slowly whispered words.

Dear and Reverend Sir:

This will make known to you what it is neither right nor even possible for me longer to conceal. Under God, it is to your ministry that I owe whatever enjoyment of true religion I have ever known. Your preaching and your whole life have stirred in my heart a reverent admiration and love which I have been unwilling to express to you, or even admit to myself, until your recent sad bereavement has at last given me liberty to speak. I pray God that you may not be offended at my intruding so soon upon your grief, and that you may not find this baring of my inmost heart to you an act immodest and unmaidenly. I should not write you thus if I were not sure beyond all doubting that my affection for your person and your ministry combines in truth a human love with love that is divine. With all the power of my soul I do beseech that you will let me visit you, that I may try to tell in word and act what these mere written words fall so far short of telling.

Prudence Prynne

Here was, indeed, occasion for much prayerful meditation, and to this the holy man soon turned.

Though he did not achieve any solution of his main problem, he soon was able to decide that he must grant to the importunate young gentlewoman the interview she sought. Her birth and breeding entitled her to that much. So did his pastoral duty. And not the least weighty of his reasons for allowing this perilous meeting the worthy man recorded in his diary thus: "Nature itself causes in me a mighty tenderness for a person so very amiable."

On a crisp and sunlit February afternoon a few days later, Prudence Prynne was making her way through the newly fallen snow to the residence of the Reverend Cotton Mather.

"Mother," she had said on starting, "will you go into your chamber and pray for me during this hour?" Then, brushing away the beginning of a tear, she added: "Mother, I just don't want to go on living if I fail to-day."

As the knocker pounded firmly on the parsonage door, the noise of its tapping reached the study, in which a kneeling figure was seeking last-minute aid and wisdom from on high for the impending trial. Of the two persons about to discuss the question of their possible marriage to each other, it would be hard to say which was the more profoundly stirred. The girl's outward calmness indifferently concealed her terrific inner consciousness that all she considered worth liv-

ing for might be won or lost in the next few minutes. It might seem that the clergyman had far less at stake, yet the disturbance in his heart could scarcely have been greater if his very life had been threatened with destruction.

The servant who admitted Prudence led her along the hall and rapped softly at the study door. Cotton Mather was still on his knees, not yet sufficiently fortified against the coming ordeal. He rose quickly, walked unsteadily across the room, and swung back the door.

"God bless you, Prudence," he said solemnly by way of greeting. "You are welcome to this place of many prayerful meditations."

"If God's blessing shall ever come to me," the girl replied fervently, "it will come in this place."

As the door closed behind her, she moved slowly over to the fireplace, then turned toward the distant window and seemed to be watching the golden whiteness of the sun and snow.

"Will you sit in this chair, my dear daughter?" invited the pastor.

"It would be better that I kneel," she answered, without moving; "more suited to my frame of mind and to the desperate hoping of my heart. Though you have spoken to me as your 'dear daughter,' I pray that you will not think of me so, for I desire, if God wills it, to be your wife."

The simple, sudden frankness of the girl was overpowering. It fascinated her hearer as no artfulness could. In all his life he had never looked upon one whose soul and body seemed to him so clearly beautiful as did hers at that tragic moment. Such loveliness was offering itself to him in the hour of his overmastering tenderness and need. He would have been less, or more, than human did he not long to yield and clasp her in his arms, sealing their betrothal with kisses that burn, and satisfy.

Scarcely had she finished speaking when he stood close before her, holding her trembling hands in his, looking down into her troubled, pleading eyes. Beautiful eyes they were, and their message was unmistakable as they searched his own for the answer to their plea. Of a sudden they seemed to read that answer. Their troubled uncertainty melted away like a mist at dawn. A heavenly contentment shone forth like the rising of the sun. A low cry of happiness broke from her lips; lips that were instinctively, invitingly forming themselves to receive, and as eagerly to give in return, love's blessing.

"Prudence," he murmured, "love is the very breath of God's being. Let us take to Him in prayer the painful longings of our hearts, that we may seek only His will, if such it be, in joining thus our lives together."

Before her eyes there quickly came again the troubled mist of hope and fear; of hope deferred and

fear revived. Now this prayer might lead her heavenly-minded lover into total blindness toward the dearest things of earth. A sudden inspiration, divine or diabolic,— at the moment she cared little which,— prompted her to do again a shameless, shocking thing, to win the man she loved. Before they knelt to pray, he had released her hands. She placed them gently on his shoulders; then, in a daring flash of passion, bent forward and kissed him quickly on the lips.

The flush that mounted to his cheek was not of indignation; his eyes told her that. She had stirred love, not wrath, and for an instant she believed that she had won, and that the prayer would be at least postponed till properly prepared with kisses. So little did she understand the all-controlling power of Puritanic godliness! True, Cotton Mather hesitated, and took again her hands in his, and drew her closer to him; but at length, releasing her, he said more calmly than before, "First, Prudence, we must pray together."

The prayer was long and fervent. He prayed aloud for guidance into the path of God's highest service. She prayed silently and shamelessly that God would cause this man to love and marry her, agreeing in return to perform almost miracles of service at his side in the cause of true religion, if only her petition were granted. He prayed in faith; she prayed in a growing doubt that deepened to despair.

Notwithstanding all the solemn praying at this tender interview, the Lord failed to make known His decision promptly. Subsequent meetings seemed necessary; seemed necessary to the girl, at least. The minister found them practically unavoidable, so he told himself; but Satan or any other competent observer could easily see that he yearned for them almost as keenly as she did. To be sure, he held tearful vigils and tormenting fasts before and after, but there can be no doubt that he fearfully enjoyed himself during. Their encounters came to be something like contests: he preached to her for the salvation of her immortal soul; she rather successfully distracted his attention to her mortal body. He reduced her to tears of godly sorrow for her sins; he thought they were that kind of tears, at any rate. Perhaps they were, but they almost melted his self-restraint into a rapturous surrender when he saw them on her cheek.

Then Rumor poisoned the romance by damning the young lady's past. "Her reputation has been under some Disadvantage," reluctantly admits the Mather diary. "She has gott but a bad Name among the Generality of the People; and there appears no Possibility of her speedy Recovery of it, be her Carriage never so vertuous, and her Conversation never so notorious."

Of course Prudence was far too independent in thought and deed to find favor with "the Generality

of the People" of seventeenth-century Boston; yet their charge against her was only an indirect one: they urged "the Disadvantages of the Company which has continually resorted unto her unhappy Father's House." The entire Prynne family conformed too little to the current Puritan type of thinking to be well liked in their community, and naturally there gathered about them a company of similarly wrong-minded persons. This background was a dangerous one from which to choose a wife for the leading orthodox preacher of the day. Cotton Mather took fright at once.

This fright was tenfold heightened when the community began to whisper together in hostile fashion about their minister's extreme and unseemly promptness in seeking a new wife, his former one having barely got settled in Heaven by this time. They fully believed he was courting Prudence. He as fully believed that she rather was courting him; but he was too gallant to clear himself by putting the blame on her. Above all, however, is the fact that by this time he was undoubtedly head over heels in love with this charming young person, whose daring originality in campaigning for his affections had won his temporarily vacant heart. His conscience, nevertheless, to which he was an abject slave, was gradually determining to forbid this sudden passion. He saw the conflict coming, and was tremendously stirred. "My Spirit is

excessively broken," he writes. "There is Danger of my dying suddenly, with smothered Griefs and Fears."

Heroic action was urgently needed. Nothing less would suffice than the headlong eviction of Dan Cupid from the godly heart of Cotton Mather. Better to "die suddenly, with smothered Griefs and Fears," than to scandalize the "People of God" by marrying against their pet prejudices. He explains his motives to his conscience and his diary, in the following words: —

(March 13, 1703) "And now, being after all due Deliberation, fully satisfied, that my Countenancing the Proposals of coming one Day to a Marriage, with the Gentlewoman so often mentioned in these Papers, will not be consistent with my public Serviceableness; but that the Prejudices in the Minds of the People of God against it, are insuperable, and little short of universal: I sett myself to make unto the Lord Jesus Christ, a Sacrifice of a Person, who, for many charming Accomplishments, has not many equals in the English America. . . . I struck my Knife into the Heart of my Sacrifice by a Letter to her Mother."

Then came vengeance; not from Prudence Prynne, whom he was thus casting off, but from Cotton Mather, the very human lover, whose tender passion Cotton Mather the Puritan ascetic was crucifying. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde never struggled more fiercely

than did these two Cotton Mathers, the sinner and the saint, the body and the soul, on the very day following the "Sacrifice." The conflict, however, is described by the diary in terms of a struggle with the Devil.

"Should I tell in how many forms the Devil has assaulted me," writes the tormented divine, "it would strike my Friends with Horrour. Sometimes Temptations to Impurities: and sometimes to Blasphemy and Atheism and the Abandonment of all Religion as a mere Delusion: and sometimes to Self-Destruction itself. These, even These, O miserable Mather, do follow thee with an astonishing Fury. But I fall down into the Dust on my Study-floor, with Tears before the Lord: and then they quickly vanish: Tis fair weather again. Lord, what wilt thou do with me ?"

Mather the sinner was not, however, altogether slain in this spiritual combat. In fact, he was soon so robust again that Mather the saint found it necessary to engage in several solemn fasts and endless prayings "against the temptations of widowhood," as he phrased it. On at least one occasion he fasted and prayed for three days in straight succession. Sometimes he thought he would like to remain a widower; then again soon afterward he usually thought he would not like such a lonely life at all. His father and friends, moreover, were so frequently inciting him to further matrimony that gradually he yielded to these

combined influences and began to survey hopefully the eligible ladies in his neighborhood; not, however, before he had renewed his renunciation of the beloved and persistent Prudence Prynne.

When Prudence had first seen the letter of renunciation, sent to her mother by the conscience-ridden Mather, she had by no means broken down and burst into tears. Instead, a quite unreasonable calmness concealed the grief she felt. It was no surprise to her that the holy man had reached this decision: she had felt and feared its coming from the very moment, on that fateful day in his study, when he had so narrowly saved himself from improprieties by insisting on lengthy prayer for guidance, or possibly protection.

"Mother," she said, as they sat in her bedroom after she had read the minister's letter of dismissal, "I shall never stop loving him, never. And, Mother, I don't believe he can stop loving me either. He does love me. I have seen it, in a thousand ways."

"He will not let himself love you, Prudence," her mother answered in anger; "and the reason is not his love of God. It is his cowardly fear of gossip and of people's prejudices against our independent ways."

"I shall not give him up," continued the girl firmly. "I shall win him yet, in spite of gossip and prejudice; maybe in spite of God, too," she ended defiantly.

The campaign she carried on from this day forth seems to have disarmed gossip and prejudice rapidly;

but against the Puritan God and the Puritan conscience of his Boston legate it failed utterly. She won over the great minister's friends and neighbors, and at last visited his aged but influential father, the Reverend Increase Mather, pleading for his blessing on her suit for the hand of his distinguished son. In all these efforts she prospered in vain.

"In my Absence," writes Cotton Mather, after returning from a trip to Salem, "the young Gentlewoman to whom I have been so unkind many Weeks or Months ago, writes and comes to my Father, and brings her good Mother with her and charms the Neighbors into her Interests; and renews her Importunities that I would make her mine. My apprehension of Damage to arise therefrom unto the holy Interests of Religion, fixes me still in an unalterable Resolution, that I must never hearken to her Proposals, whatever may be the Consequence of my being so resolved."

The consequences did indeed become unpleasant. If the "people of God" were scandalized at Mather's courting this lively lady, the people of the Devil — that is, the enemies of Mather — were outraged at his jilting her. A sample of what they said about him is preserved in a pamphlet: —

"A Gentlewoman of Gayety, near Boston, was frequently visited by the Reverend Mr. C. M., which giving offence to some of his Audience, he promised

to avoid her Conversation. But Good intentions being frustrated by vicious Inclinations, he becomes again her humble Servant: the reciprocal promise being first made, that NEITHER OF THEM SHOULD CONFESS THEIR SEEING EACH OTHER." (The capitals are in the original pamphlet.)

On the other hand, these harrowing emotional experiences had a most favorable effect on his preaching. In his diary he noted that the Lord was giving him special assistance to outdo himself in pulpit eloquence. He failed, of course, to give the Devil and Prudence Prynne due credit in the matter.

His friends warned him of the jealous rage of the jilted girl. "I am thereupon threatened by some with exquisite Revenges and Reproaches from her defeated Love," he wrote. But Prudence was much too deeply in love for such petty spite, and she, with her mother, soon furnished him with an alibi. "God strangely appears to me, in this Point also," he writes again, "by disposing the young Gentlewoman, with her Mother, to furnish me with their Assertions, That I have never done any unworthy Thing; but acted most honorably and righteously toward them, and as became a Christian, and a Minister; and they will give all the World leave to censure them after the hardest Manner in the World, if ever they should speak the Contrary."

No doubt Prudence meant all she said in this gen-

erous statement, but when, only a few weeks afterward, she learned that her ex-lover was hot on the trail of a charming young widow, she burst into a jealous rage and threatened to relate in public the unedifying details of her recent relations with the godly widower. Mather was alarmed, but firm. "The Rage of that young Gentlewoman, whom out of obedience to God, I have rejected," he writes, "(and never more pleased God than in rejecting of her Addresses to me) is transporting her; to threaten that she will be a Thorn in my Side, and contrive all possible Wayes to vex me, affront me, disgrace me, in my Attempting a Return to the married State with another Gentlewoman."

He stood, nevertheless, immovable; partly no doubt for reasons of godly firmness in well-doing; partly also because by now he was decorously and piously in love with candidate Number Two, the charming widow whom his congregation and the Almighty both approved. She seemed to him a sort of reward for virtue, and his finding of her a providential leading. "God shows me a gentlewoman," he confides to his diary, "within two houses of my own; a gentlewoman of piety and probity, and a most unspotted reputation; a gentlewoman of good witt and sense, and discretion at ordering an household; a gentlewoman of incomparable sweetness in her temper and humor; a gentlewoman honorably descended

and related; and a very comely person." Aged thirty, and a widow of four years' waiting, she conformed perfectly to the plans and specifications drawn up by the community and God: "the universal satisfaction which it has given to the people of God through town and country, proclaims itself to a degree which perfectly amazes me," he writes.

On August 18, 1703, Cotton Mather became the second husband of this irreproachable widow, "the most agreeable Consort (all things considered)," so he writes of her, "that all America could have afforded me."

By "all things considered," he seems to have meant that it did not really make so very much difference whether he loved his new consort or not, if only God and the church community liked her.

With a delay of but eight months after the death of his first wife, this eminent divine was once again safe from malicious gossip and seductive feminine advances. He stood forth in a naughty world as a spared monument of godliness triumphant over human frailty.

VI

SIC SEMPER UXORIBUS

"William Lee . . . Died Novr. 5, 1637, Ætat 94. Had issue from his Loyns in his Life-time two hundred lacking two."

This statement in Judge Samuel Sewall's famous diary is followed by further statistics, showing how it was done. Prolific father Lee, it appears, had three wives, in proper sequence of course, who shared his responsibility for

Children	17
Grandchildren	78
Great-grandchildren	103
Gross achievement	198

This happened in Old England, where Judge Sewall was visiting at the time he heard of and jotted down this somewhat conspicuous performance, possibly for purposes of comparison, or inspiration. It may indeed be that William Lee had thus won the multiplication championship of the mother-country and father-land, England. If so, Sewall, the New Englander, must have felt a certain proud superiority,

both for himself personally and for the American colony from which he came. Already he was well along toward his record of fourteen children by the first of his three wives, yet among the champion progenitors of Puritan New England he was scarcely more than a respectable mediocrity. Witness, for example, the maternal multiplicity of a certain Maria Hazard who spent the first hundred years of her life in Rhode Island. We are told that she "could count five hundred children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. When she died, two hundred and five of them were alive; a granddaughter of hers had already been a grandmother near fifteen years." Numerous other fruitful persons are of record in this time and region who, departing this life, left behind more than one hundred living descendants; one, a Massachusetts citizen, bequeathed to the Commonwealth one hundred and fifty-seven, including five great-grandchildren.

This is the pace that populates new continents and beats the undesirable alien immigrants at their own game. In more recent days it has been highly praised, and its slackening has been much lamented in many of our best and smallest families. No doubt New England of the twentieth century would do well to study somewhat the matrimonial methods of her past.

These methods were simple and direct. They con-

sisted, first of all, in marrying early, and often. From fourteen to sixteen years was a common age for the bride to enter upon her profession of enlarging a home, all other professions being effectually closed to her. The groom would usually be only a little older, his natural promptness in the matter being assisted by the community's severe disapproval of bachelors. A really old bachelor was a rare bird, and in the judgment of his neighbors and the magistrates he was potentially a jailbird. A Connecticut law of 1636 forbade any such person to keep house by himself.

In those good old days, married persons, especially wives, did not live as long as we do now. The average length of life in Rhode Island, for instance, during the eighteenth century is said to have been only thirty-three years, whereas to-day the average expectation of life there is probably well over fifty years. Partly on this account a practice grew up in Puritan New England which might be more or less aptly called sequential monogamy; that is, one husband and wife at a time, while they both last, but a prompt replacement when either wears out and dies. Second, third, and even fourth marriages were common, and it was no rarity for a three-times widower to wed a twice- or thrice-released widow (the release having been effected by death, which had not then been replaced by divorce as the logical terminater of

the matrimonial relationship). The promptness of these remarriages is even more startling than their frequency. The very first wedding in the colony of Plymouth was that of Edward Winslow, who had then been a widower less than two months, to Susanna White, a widow of only three months' waiting. Another optimistic widower is on record as having proposed to his second wife on the eve of the day he buried his first, though a certain delicacy of sentiment did postpone the wedding for nearly a week thereafter. Urgent household duties may have seemed to necessitate such suddenness in the cases just mentioned, but what shall we say of that governor of New Hampshire who married a lady just ten days after the death of her lamented husband ?

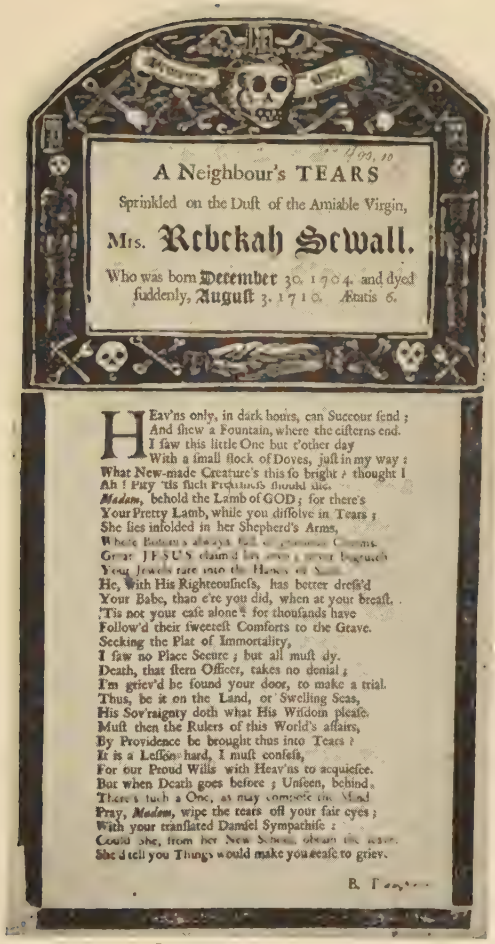
Remarriages almost always involved two flocks of children, to which a third flock was gradually added, the resulting family group being a sort of cumulation. By no means all of the large families were cumulated, however, and the normal per capita productivity of early New England wives set an example (a horrible one, perhaps) for a comfort-loving posterity. Items follow: —

"He was twice married," says a contemporary account of a Puritan worthy. "By his first wife he had six children. But his next wife was a young gentlewoman" — of whom better things could be expected, seems to be the implication of the apologetic and dis-

paraging "But" with which this sentence began. She proved, indeed, worthy of her gentility, for by her he "had no less than twenty children added unto the number of six which he had before."

"One woman in New England," continues this record of worthy achievement, "has had not less than twenty-two children: whereof she buried fourteen sons and six daughters. Another woman has had no less than twenty-three children by one husband; whereof nineteen lived unto men's and women's estate. A third was mother to seven-and-twenty children; and she that was mother to Sir William Phipps, the late governor of New England, had no less than twenty-five children besides him: she had one-and-twenty sons and five daughters."

Descending now from this list of champions into the ranks of mediocrity, it is worth noting that an old manuscript of 1675 states that the average size of contemporary New England households was 9.02 persons. Lacking means for checking adequately the accuracy of this figure, we may find some support for it as a safe minimum. In the *History of Northampton*, for instance, its author, James R. Trumbull, tells us that twenty-five of the earliest settlers in that region had three hundred and thirty children born to them. Moreover, a lengthy list could be compiled of eminent New Englanders of the early period who either begat or were born into, or both, families numbering



A Neighbour's TEARS

Sprinkled on the Duſt of the Amiable Virgin,

Mrs. Rebekah Sewall.

Who was born December 30. 1704. and dyed ſuddenly, Auguſt 3. 1710. Ætatis 6.

HEav'ns only, in dark hours, can Succour ſend;
And ſhew a Fountain, where the ciſterns end.
I ſaw this little One but t'other day
With a ſmall flock of Doves, juſt in my way:
What New-made Creature's this ſo bright? thought I
Ah! Pity 'tis ſuch Prettiness ſhould die.
Madam, behold the Lamb of GOD; for there's
Your Pretty Lamb, while you diſſolve in Tears;
She lies infolded in her Shepherd's Arms,
Whose Bottom's always full of Consolations.
Great JESUS claim'd his Interest in Paradise
Your Jewels rare into the Hands of Saints.
He, with His Righteouſneſs, has better dreſs'd
Your Babe, than e're you did, when at your breaſt.
'Tis not your caſe alone: for thouſands have
Follow'd their ſweeteſt Comforts to the Grave.
Seeking the Plat of Immortality,
I ſaw no Place Secure; but all muſt dy.
Death, that ſtern Officer, takes no denial;
I'm griev'd be found your door, to make a trial.
Thus, be it on the Land, or Swelling Seas,
His Sov'raignty doth what His Wiſdom pleaſe.
Muſt then the Rulers of this World's affairs,
By Providence be brought thus into Tears?
It is a Leſſon hard, I muſt confeſs,
For our Proud Wills with Heav'ns to acquieſce.
But when Death goes before; Unſeen, behind,
There's ſuch a One, as may compoſe the Mind
Pray, *Madam*, wipe the tears off your fair eyes;
With your tranſlated Damſel Sympathiſe:
Could ſhe, from her New Schools, obſerve the Mind
She'd tell you Things would make you ceaſe to grieve.

B. T[illegible]

Courtesy of the Boston Public Library

A "MORTUARY BORDER" ON THE DEATH OF REBEKAH SEWALL, AGED SIX

between ten and twenty members. Finally, the testimony of gravestones might be adduced, to explain, perhaps, why no more than 9.02 persons were the average number of a family alive at any one time. "Here lies ——," says a Plymouth tombstone, mentioning the deceased mother's name, "with twenty small children." Again, Professor Charles M. Andrews tells us that "an instance is given of a burying ground near Bath, Maine, in which there were the graves of ten married women, eight of whom had died between the ages of twenty-two and thirty, probably as the result of large families and overwork."

Clearly our Puritan ancestors specialized in production rather than in preservation. Only a few of the children they brought into the world managed to survive. "In the bareness and cold of Massachusetts, the mortality of infants was frightful," writes Arthur W. Calhoun *(A Social History of the American Family)*. "One man had sixteen children. The first was only a year and a half old when the second was born. When the baby was four days old the older child died. This calamity was five times repeated. Married nine years, the mother had one child living and five dead. With freezing homes, bad diet, and Spartan treatment it does not seem strange that a large proportion of seventeenth-century children died in infancy. This was the case even in the most favored families; thus, of Cotton Mather's fifteen children

only two survived him, and of Judge Sewall's fourteen only three outlived their father."

What this author means by the words "Spartan treatment" he explains thus: "It seems that Locke's Thoughts on Education," he writes, "published in England in 1690, was popular in the new world. His precepts were diffused on the pages of almanacs, the 'best sellers' (save the Bible) of all eighteenth-century books. From him came such practical suggestions as 'always wetting children's feet in cold water to toughen them; and also have children wear thin-soled shoes that the wet may come freely in.' . . . Josiah Quincy, at three years, was taken from his warm bed, winter and summer, carried to the cellar kitchen, and dipped three times in water just from the pump. He said that in his childhood he sat more than half the time with wet feet without ill effects. . . . Nothing was allowed to interfere with due observance of religious form. The infant must be taken to the fireless church for baptism on the first Sabbath after birth no matter if ice had to be broken in the font. . . . One would suppose that interminable sermons in icy churches must have been responsible for many deaths."

From the strictly Calvinistic point of view, however, it did not really matter much how high the infant mortality became. Six weeks or sixty years spent in this vale of tears were equally unimportant

in comparison with the eternity of bliss or woe to which the solemn lottery of predestination assigned alike the newborn babe and its oldest surviving great-great-grandparent.

The high mortality of mothers was somewhat similarly regarded, yet there was a difference here. Unlike the infants, whose opinions concerning their own early decease were known only to God, the mothers were able to express a personal and self-regarding point of view in the matter, not alone to God but also to their husbands. To be sure, the purposes of the mysterious Almighty must not be challenged, but was it clearly His will that the toiling wife, already overburdened with household duties, should bring an additional child into the world every year or so ? No doubt this question occurred to the wife oftener than to the husband. The statistics seem to indicate, however, that he generally urged an affirmative reply to her almost blasphemous question, and that she did not appeal from his decision. The diary of Judge Samuel Sewall, for instance, modestly announces the almost annually recurrent event, in the phrase, "Uxor praegnans est." The motto of Sewall and his contemporaries seems to have been, "Sic semper uxoribus." Indeed, the case for Puritan asceticism quite breaks down when the birth rate is considered, as there is no more warrant for relating this birth rate to Genesis i.28 than to I Corinthians vii.9. A fair and adequate

statement is yet to be made of the relation between the unchecked domestic despotisms of the New England fathers of the first two centuries and the counterbalancing inhibitions in other departments of their lives. Governor Bradford, in his *History of Plimoth Plantation,* suggests an explanation for contemporary wickedness which may also explain in part the lawful excesses in the matrimonial relation which left on Puritan tombstones the names of two or more wives for one husband. He says: "It may be in this case as it is with waters when their streames are stopped or dammed up, when they gett passage they flow with more violence, and make more noys and disturbance than when they are suffered to rune quietly in their owne chanels." A restriction designed to protect, not the wife, but the Sabbath, is shown in the practice of some ministers in refusing to baptize children born on that holy day, because they believed that such children must have been conceived on a Sabbath, a day reserved solely for rest and worship. The story is told of a zealous minister who rigorously refused all such baptisms until, alas, his own wife gave birth to twins on a Sabbath day.

As the twentieth-century husband looks back upon the status of the New England male two or three centuries ago, he may well experience a few regrets. In that happy, golden, masculine age, man possessed all the rights, but he generously allowed to his

wife a liberal share in the duties. The suffrage amendment was then undreamed of, and the preëminence of the brutal sex was rarely challenged. Perhaps this helps to explain why there were only six divorces in the entire history of Plymouth down to 1691, a period of seventy years, and also why the bereft husband so commonly and so promptly found a successor for his deceased wife. Was the marital relation, then, a fine and lasting rapture in those days when it was so durable ? In a few cases probably it was, if we may rely upon the testimony of a small number of surviving love letters written by husbands to their absent wives, and a somewhat larger number of eulogies on wives deceased. Of the latter, the following is a good sample, from the middle of the eighteenth century.

"She always went through the difficulties of childbearing," says this widower, of his departed spouse, "with a remarkable steadfastness, faith, patience, and decency. . . . Indeed, she would sometimes say to me that bearing, tending, and burying children was hard work, and that she had done a great deal of it for one of her age (she had six children, whereof she buried four, and died in the 24th year of her age), yet would say it was the work she was made for, and what God in his providence had called her to, and she could freely do it all for Him."

In a few instances, also, the records show the very

opposite of such dutiful serenity. The case of Mrs. Hugh Browne, brought into court in the year 1641, will serve as an illustration. She had broken her poor husband's head and threatened even to kill him. For good measure she had clawed his face, and, as he fled, thrown stones at him, remarking the while that he was a beast and that she wished he were hanged. The court's contribution toward restoring felicity to this home was to order that Mrs. Browne be severely whipped. A good many cases like this one are given in the Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, records "which lift the roof off of every house" in that region. How badly they exaggerate the average of current domestic unhappiness it is difficult to determine. The editor of these records asserts that "nearly every man, woman, and child in the Colony sooner or later found his or her way into the courts in those early days (1636–1683), either as plaintiff, defendant, or witness," but this quarrelsomeness dealt, of course, with many other subjects than the matrimonial relation.

Possibly a little light may be shed on the merits of early New England's durable wedlock by a consideration of the contemporary suicide record. Under date of Wednesday, April 4, 1688, the following item appears in Samuel Sewall's Diary: "At night Sam. Marion's wife hangs herself in the Chamber, fastening a Cord to the Rafter-Joice. Two or three

swore she was distracted, and had been for some time, and so she was buried in the burying place." If Mrs. Sam. Marion was "distracted," what was it that had distracted her? A rather grim sort of religion and a somewhat exacting kind of matrimony made up so large a part of woman's life in those days that neither can quite escape being suspected of having had a hand in such cases of suicidal despondency. An isolated instance of self-destruction would, of course, have little significance toward such a conclusion, but these cases were by no means rare. So frequent, indeed, had they become by the year 1660 that the legislature sitting at Boston enacted a law against them, and actually imposed a post-mortem penalty! "Considering how far Satan doth prevail upon persons within this Jurisdiction to make way with themselves," says the preamble to this statute, the lawmakers "to bear testimony against such wicked and unnatural practices, that others may be deterred therefrom; Do order that if any person be wilfully guilty of their own Death, every such person shall be denied the privilege of being Buried in the Common Burying place of Christians, but shall be Buried in some Common Highway and a Cart-load of Stones laid upon the grave as a Brand of Infamy, and as a warning to others to beware of the like Damnable practices." This strange law remained in effect for more than a century and a half, and was evidently enforced some-

times: witness the entries in Sewall's diary for October 5 and 6, 1688: "About 9. night, Thomas, an Indian and a very usefull Servant of Mr. Oliver, hanged himself in the Brewhouse. The Coroner sat on him, having a Jury, and ordered his burial by the highway with a Stake through his Grave." Again, in 1724, Boston was in such a state of mind over the suicide question that Sewall caused to be published and advertised for sale a sermon on the subject by the famous Dr. Increase Mather, entitled "A Call to the Tempted. A Sermon on the horrid Crime of Self-Murder . . . now published for a Charitable Stop to Suicides." Thus the poor suicide seems to have been barred from Heaven no less than from the cemetery. The woes of life, whether matrimonial or other, must have been bitter indeed to those who still preferred self-destruction plus such penalties.

In summing up the services of the wives and mothers of this pioneer period, an eminent New Englander has paid this eloquent tribute: —

"Generations of them cooked, carried water, washed and made clothes, bore children in lonely peril, and tried to bring them up safely through all sorts of physical exposures without medical or surgical help, lived themselves in terror of savages, in terror of the wilderness, and under the burden of a sad and cruel creed, and sank at last into nameless graves, without any vision of the grateful days when

millions of their descendants should rise up and call them blessed."

Theirs was essentially a service of submission. Submission to endless household drudgery; submission to the domestic despotism of their husbands; submission to the inscrutable cruelties of a terrifying religion. The reward of submission was a nameless grave. The alternatives to submission were flight into the wilderness to live among the savages, or summons into court for disorderly and froward conduct, or trial for heresy, followed by banishment or worse. In an age of repression they were doubly repressed. Their normal inheritance was an inferiority complex. Their descendants rise up and call them blessed because their cruel hardships seem to have placed their posterity in a promised land, safely remote from any such blessedness as that of the foremothers.

VII

THE TERRIBLE YOUNGER GENERATION AND HOW THEY WERE EDUCATED

The wild waywardness of the younger generation seems to have been no less disturbing two or three centuries ago than it is to-day. The departures of youth from the standards established by age were a favorite subject of lamentation among the elders of early New England. Any great calamity that befell, from smallpox to Indian massacre, was obviously a sign of God's displeasure with the growing wickedness, especially that of the youngsters. If they were not rescued and brought back to the good old ways, the wrath of the Almighty was certain to explode in the near future, inflicting remarkable damage on old and young alike.

"Do your children and family grow more godly?" inquires a Puritan divine in 1657. "I find greatest trouble and grief about the rising generation. Young people are little stirred here; but they strengthen one another in evil by example and by counsel. Much ado have I with my own family."

Laws for promoting a more strict observance of the Lord's Day in Massachusetts, enacted later in the century and just after a disastrous Indian war, were

prefaced with the explanation that the war had been a punishment of the colony for the "disorder and rudeness of youth in many congregations in time of the worship of God, whereby sin and profaneness is greatly increased."

By 1713, disorderly night life in Boston seems to have been well started, to the extreme annoyance of the Reverend Cotton Mather, who comments on it thus in his diary: —

"There are knotts of riotous Young Men in the Town. On purpose to insult Piety, they will come under my Window in the Middle of the Night, and sing profane and filthy Songs. The last Night they did so, and fell upon People with Clubs, taken off my Wood-pile. 'T is hightime to call in the Help of the Government of the Place, for the punishing and suppressing of these Disorders."

This was clearly a case for the police. In fact, policemen of one sort or another seem to have been a main reliance in dealing with the unruly younger generation. The church services, for instance, could hardly have been carried on if there had not been several kinds of police officers to overawe and chastise the mischievously irreverent boys. Since many of these young people were driven to church against their strong preference for going fishing or elsewhere, when once they were corralled in the back part of the meetinghouse they tried to get as much out of

the service as possible, in their own way. Some of them were placed in the gallery, whence even an inferior marksman could hardly fail to land a walnut or other projectile on the bald head of some drowsing deacon in the pews below. The Boston Town Records show that this situation had to be dealt with as early as the year 1643: "Sergeant Johnson and Walter Merry are requested to take the oversight of the boys in the galleries, and in case of unruly disorders to acquaint the Magistrates therewith." In 1659, "John Dawes is ordered to oversee the youth at the new meeting-house that they behave themselves reverently in the time of divine worship," and seven years later he was commissioned to look after those "that ar disorderly in the time of God sollem worship, to compel such as ar without doors to goe into the metting hous & such as ar disorderly within with a small wand to correct them." In some cases, authority was specifically given to apply the "small wand" when, where, and how it would best promote the cause of true religion.

Sometimes this ecclesiastical policeman haled a bad boy before a magistrate. Such a case is that of John Davis of Northampton, brought before a justice of the peace there in 1701, "for his Disorderly Carriage at meeting upon the Sabbath; forsaking his own Seat and Breaking over the Back of others seats; and for Breach of peace in kicking of Isaac Bridgmen." He

was fined five shillings and costs for the breach of the peace, and ten shillings for breaking over the seats, but the justice suspended "the execution of the ten shillings for the present."

It appears that the small boy was sometimes no more eager to go to school than to church, and that he was not above "playing hookey." Thus, Judge Sewall's diary tersely remarks, under date of September 15, 1688: —

"Corrected Sam. for breach of the 9th Commandment, saying he had been at the Writing School, when he had not."

The Reverend Cotton Mather also suggests the need for checking up on truancy and other moral lapses, in the following characteristic manner: —

"I would renew my Sollicitations in the Society for the Suppression of Disorders, that some good Men may take their Walks among the Children, in the Time and Place of their Playes, and observe the wicked Language heard among them, and employ the best Methods to nip the Impiety of their Language in the Bud. As also to walk in School-time, and observe what Children are at Play, and see that they be sent unto some School or other."

Cotton Mather looked upon play with the gravest suspicion. His diary shows his unceasing efforts to eliminate it from the life of his bright little ten-year-old boy, Sammy. Thus: —

"I will have Sammy turn into Latin some Sentences I prepare for him about the true and right Intent of Play, and a good Use of it."

"I must think of some exquisite and obliging Wayes, to abate Sammy's inordinate Love of Play. His Play wounds his Faculties. I must engage him in some nobler Entertainments."

A year later the antiplay campaign is still on: —

"What shall be done for the raising of Sammy's Mind above the debasing Meannesses of Play !"

"I will put Sammy upon the Translating of some Things into Latin, which may prove of use, not unto him only, but also unto many others."

"Entertain Sammy betimes, with the first Rudiments of Geography and Astronomy, as well as History; and so raise his Mind above the sillier Diversions of Childhood."

Along with the minimizing of play, much stress was laid on teaching children a self-effacing sort of politeness. "What little hope of a happy generation after us," moans a seventeenth-century writer, "when many among us scarcely know how to teach their children manners !" Here is a sample of "manners," taken from a widely circulated little book of etiquette of the period: —

"Never sit down at the table till asked, and after the blessing. Ask for nothing; tarry till it be offered thee. Speak not. Sing not, hum not, wriggle not. Spit

nowhere in the room but in the corner. When any speak to thee, stand up. Say not I have heard it before. Never endeavor to help him out if he tell it not right. Snigger not; never question the truth of it."

For the general education of the youth each town was required to provide, and if it failed to do so satisfactorily its representatives were summoned before the county court. In 1681, the Town of Haverhill, for instance, was thus "presented for not having a schoolmaster, but finding that some provision had been made for teaching children, they were released. Court further ordered that the town, before the next Ipswich court, provide an able and meet schoolmaster who will constantly attend that service, and that the school be kept near the centre of the town." The somewhat haphazard manner in which the Town of Haverhill had been carrying on its school system is thus described in the selectmen's records: —

"The 5th day of March 1679–80. Considering the great necessitie of helping children & youth & others in the knowledge of God, & his Holy wayes, the which one great help to attaine unto is Reading, And the writing is also very necessary; Therefore wee have taken as much care as wee can. Wee have made choice of Robt. Ford for to teach all those to write & also Arithmetick that shall come to him for that end; & the sd Ford have engaged to doe this worke, & to pforme the duty of a Faithfull Schoolemaster

dureing this yeare only. And for Reading, Wee have chosen the wife of Robt. Collins & agreed with her; And also the wife of John Maccallum with her consent, And also the wife of Robert Hastings. All these for to take children and youth to read. We have also published this above written the first Traineing day that was in this yeare in our Towne. Daniel Lad, senir, George Corlis, Thomas Ayers, Robert Ford, Josiah Gage."

Probably the salary of "Schoolemaster" Ford was so small that he had to eke it out by other kinds of work. It was a common thing for these town pedagogues to do miscellaneous odd jobs, from serving summonses to digging graves. "One case is extant," says Mary C. Crawford, in *Social Life in Old New England*, "of a schoolmaster who took in washing." The financing of this local education was sometimes a joint undertaking of the town and the parents whose children were being instructed. The writer just mentioned quotes a town report of 1719, as follows: —

"Voted that we will hier a school master . . . upon the following conditions, viz; Wrighters to pay four pence a week and Reeders three pence a week and the Rest to be paid by the town."

Sometimes wood for heating the schoolroom was furnished by the parents, "the child with a stingy father being then, by common consent, denied intimate relations with the fire."

Some few of these Puritan youngsters grew up and went to college. Here we encounter one of those time-honored myths about our ancestors which are likely to make them seem not quite human. We commonly think of the American college man of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as so incurably addicted to studious piety that he found little time for play and none for dissipation. It is hard to reconcile with this view such an incident as the following, recorded by one Ezra Clapp, in 1738.

"Last night," writes this earnest student, "some of the freshmen got six quarts of Rhum and about two payls fool of Sydar and about eight pounds of sugar and mad it in to Samson, and evited every scholer in college into Churtis is room, and we mad such prodigius Rought that we raised the Tutor, and he ordered us all to our rooms and some went and some taried and they gathered a gain and went up to old father Monsher dore and drumed against the dore and yeled and screamed so that a bodey would have thought that they were killing dodgs there. . . ."

This occurred at Yale; but Harvard, too, had its searchers after the realities not found in book or sermon. Witness the following incident of a few years earlier: "Mr. Graves, not having his name for nought, lost the love of the undergraduates by his too much austerity, whereupon they used to strike a nail above the hall door-catch while we were reciting to him,

and so nail him in the hall." Still earlier, these same students took a strong dislike to Harvard's third president and, as Cotton Mather puts it, they turned "cud-weeds, and, with great violations of the fifth Commandment, set themselves to travestie whatever he did and said"; which so chagrined the worthy gentleman that he resigned and, soon afterward, died.

Another escapade at Harvard had to do with the timeless custom of hazing freshmen: "March, 1682. The Corporation met in the College Library between 9 and 10 of the clock, being Monday: About 3 of the clock the undergraduates were called in the Hall to be examined about abusing the freshmen. About 5 of the clock . . . they were called in again to hear the Corporation's conclusion. That Webb should have what gifts were bestowed on him by the College taken away, and that he should be expelled the College. . . . Morover Danforth, Myles, Watson were publickly admonished for speaking irreverently about the Corporation."

It has been charged that commencement in our colleges and universities is no longer worthily observed in this twentieth century; that grotesque costumes, undignified caperings, and roistering revelry altogether eclipse the solemn ceremony of launching lives. The remedy proposed by believers in the "whatever was, is right" theory, is a return to the

uncorrupted practice of earlier days. Just what that practice was ought to be more widely known.

At the very first Harvard commencement, for instance, in the year 1642, when obviously there could have been no incorrigible "old grads" to blame for hilarious levity, it is recorded by John Winthrop that "at this commencement, complaint was made to the governors of two young men, of good quality, for foul misbehavior, in swearing and ribaldry speeches." The same writer relates the following incident of collegiate conduct shortly before the Harvard commencement of 1644: "Two of our ministers' sons, being students in the college, robbed two dwelling houses in the night of some 15 pounds. Being found out, they were ordered by the governors of the college to be there whipped, which was performed by the President himself — yet they were about twenty years of age; and after they were brought into the court and ordered to two-fold satisfaction, or to serve so long for it. We had yet no particular punishment for burglary."

Two generations later the conditions do not seem to have improved. Samuel Sewall writes in commendation of a sermon "against excess in commencement entertainments." Cotton Mather shows no small disgruntlement with Harvard customs, in such passages as the following: (July 3, 1717) "This Day, being the Commencement, as they call it; a Time of much

Resort unto Cambridge, and sorrily enough thrown away. . . ." (July 1, 1724) "This Day, being our insipid, ill-contrived anniversary Solemnity, which we call The Commencement." In a letter to Governor Saltonstall regarding the prospects of the recently established "College at New Haven," Cotton Mather pours out his bitter sentiments thus: "When the servants of God meet at your Commencement, I make no doubt, that under your Honor's influence and encouragements, they will make it an opportunity, in the most serious and mature manner, to deliberate upon projections to serve the great interests of education, and so of religion, both in your College and throughout your Colony, and not suffer an interview of your best men to evaporate such a senseless, useless, noisy impertinency, as it uses to do with us at Cambridge."

If these glimpses of commencement practice in the better days of yore should diminish somewhat our zeal for returning thereto, they may neverthless help us against the question, "Who corrupted commencement ?" The answer is, of course: "Nobody did. It was born that way."

In 1740, the great English evangelist, George Whitefield, visited Harvard and found its piety about on a level with that of English universities. He writes: "Preached at Cambridge, the chief college in New England for training the sons of the prophets.

It has one president, four tutors, and about a hundred students. The college is scarce as big as one of our least colleges at Oxford; and, as far as I could gather from some who knew the state of it, not far superior to our universities in piety. Discipline is at low ebb. Bad books are becoming fashionable among the tutors and students."

Sixty years earlier, in 1680, another foreign visitor, Jasper Danckaerts, records in the following words his impressions of this foremost institution for higher education in the American colonies: —

"We reached Cambridge about eight o'clock. It is not a large village, and the houses stand very much apart. The college building is the most conspicuous among them. We went to it, expecting to see something unusual, as it is the only college, or would-be academy of the Protestants in all America, but we found ourselves mistaken. In approaching the house we neither heard nor saw anything mentionable; but, going to the other side of the building, we heard noise enough in an upper room to lead my companion to say, 'I believe they are engaged in disputation.' We entered and went up stairs, when a person met us, and requested us to walk in, which we did.

"We found there eight or ten young fellows, sitting around, smoking tobacco, with the smoke of which the room was so full, that you could hardly see; and the whole house smelt so strongly of it that

when I was going up stairs I said, 'It certainly must be also a tavern.' We excused ourselves, that we could speak English only a little, but understood Dutch or French well, which they did not. However, we spoke as well as we could.

"We inquired how many professors there were, and they replied not one, that there was not enough money to support one. We asked how many students there were. They said at first, thirty, and then came down to twenty; I afterwards understood there are probably not ten. They knew hardly a word of Latin, not one of them, so that my companion could not converse with them. They took us to the library where there was nothing particular. We looked it over a little. They presented us with a glass of wine. This is all we ascertained there. The minister of the place goes there morning and evening to make prayer, and has charge over them; besides him, the students are under tutors or masters."

A further bit of evidence suggesting that our forefathers, during their college days, were touched with infirmities like unto those of their latest descendants, is a series of extracts from a diary. Nathaniel Ames seems to have entered Harvard in 1758, and to have completed his course in 1761. His jottings throughout these years include such items as the following: —

"March 13, 1758, Came to College, began Logick.

"18, fit with the Sophomores about Customs.

"20, Had another Fight with the Sophomores.

"Nov. 23, went to Boston, the Revenge acted at Bowmans.

"June 13, 1760, acted Tancred and Sigismunda for which we are like to be prosecuted.

"Sept. 9, President sick, wherefore much Deviltry carried on in college.

"Oct. 1, 1 scholar degraded this morning, 2 admonished, 1 punished.

"10, Kneeland's and Thayer's windows broke last night.

"Dec. 22, Gardner and Barnard admonished stealing wood.

"Feb. 26, 1761, lost 2 pistareens at cards last evening.

"March 26, first game of bat and ball.

"April 15, Dependants on the Favors of the President and Tutors sign an agreement to inform of any scholar that is guilty of profanity.

"May 19, Joseph Cabot rusticated. As soon as the President said he was rusticated, he took his hat and went out of the chapel without staying to hear the President's speech out. After prayers he bulrags the Tutors at a high rate and leaves College. His mother faints at the news.

"20, Chapel robbed of the Cushing and Bible Cloths.

"July 15, Commencement.

"16, a dance in Town House, Cambridge."

Whether typical or unusual, such college life and escapades as have been here reviewed were profoundly shocking to the full-grown Puritan conscience. A graceless Joseph Cabot and his fainting mother; a tobacco-soaked and Latin-shy little Harvard, where they read bad books and held senseless and noisy commencements; a rum-inspired freshman riot among the sons of the prophets at Yale — all these portentous outbreakings of wickedness, no less than the perennial and godless disorders of youth in the services of the meetinghouse on the Lord's Day, supplied the elder Puritans with the gravest anxieties concerning the salvation of the terrible younger generation, and also concerning the probable penalties about to be inflicted on old and young alike by a merciful but easily irritated Providence.

VIII

THE MORE OR LESS "BLUE LAWS"

NEARLY a century and a half ago there was published anonymously in London a book which described the astonishing "Blue Laws" of New Haven, in the revolting American colonies. This book made interesting reading for the Englishmen of that day, because it told of the ludicrously absurd laws and customs among the rebel Americans whom they were fighting. What loyal Briton could, indeed, refrain from roars of mirth upon reading such things as the following about the Puritanic regulations for daily living among his despised provincial enemies?

Over in that backwoods region of religious fanaticism, said this *General History of Connecticut*, the law provides that "no one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep house, cut hair, or shave, on the Sabbath-day. No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or Fasting day. No one shall read Common Prayer, keep Christmas or Saint days, make minced pies, dance, play cards, or play on any instrument of music, except the drum, trumpet, and jewsharp. Every male shall have his hair cut round, according to a cap."

The man who wrote these interesting revelations had lived in the region he was describing, and was to that extent qualified to tell about its customs. That, however, seems to have been almost his only qualification as a reliable historian. As a loyalist refugee, who had fled to England during the American Revolution, he might be not altogether free from bias against the land which had cast him out. This anonymous writer, whose name was Samuel Peters, happened to be a college mate, possibly also a fellow townsman, of the painstakingly exact Trumbull, famous historian of Connecticut. Trumbull once said of him that, "of all men with whom he had ever been acquainted, Dr. Peters he had thought, from his first knowledge of him, the least to be depended on as to any matter of fact." An opportunity to check up Peters's alleged habit of exaggeration is available to anyone who will journey down the length of the Connecticut River, from Canada to Saybrook, in search of that exact spot where, according to the Peters narrative, the "water is consolidated without frost, by pressure, by swiftness, between the pinching, sturdy rocks, to such a degree of induration, that no iron crow can be forced into it; here iron, lead, and cork have one common weight."

All this does not disprove, of course, the statements he made about the blue laws, but it would naturally incline us not to accept those statements unless they

were confirmed from some other source of information. As a matter of fact, many of them are so confirmed. Indeed, most of the queer laws mentioned by Peters were enacted at some time or other somewhere in New England, as were also other equally queer ones which he left out. If all these more or less blue laws, some of which have never been repealed, were declared to be once more in force to-day, the modern style of living would be somewhat cramped. Illustrations follow: —

The use of tobacco would be severely limited. According to a Massachusetts law, for instance, he who smoked in the street was liable to a fine. He might smoke in his own house, unless there were a stranger with him, in which case the fine again menaced him. If he insisted upon smoking with his friends, there would be to-day apparently only one way for the Bostonian to avoid breaking the law — to board some sort of craft and go out to sea at least five miles: the old statute allowed a man to smoke "if on a journey, and five miles from any house."

As for liquor and drunkenness, the old blue laws would make a horrible example of the man who frequently walked like a ship in a storm. They might hale him before a court and convict him of being a drunkard. After that he would have to go about with a large red "D" on his sweater, and could be distinguished from a Dartmouth athlete only because his

"D" was red instead of green. Other portions of the alphabet, employed as penalties for other crimes, would create similar ambiguities for the athletic insignia of other colleges. Thus an "A" might indicate either Amherst or Adulterer; "B," Bowdoin or Burglar; and so on.

Even liars would have to be punished if these terrible old laws were declared to be in force. Just think of the tired business man coming home from a not very successful fishing excursion and, after having entertained his friends with a detailed and circumstantial account of the size of the fish he had caught and given away, being seized by a stern tithingman and marched off to court for a mendacity fine. The second time he was detected thus inflating the truth he would be publicly whipped. Moreover, lest politics be contaminated by his lack of veracity, he might be deprived of his right to vote.

Less amusing were the laws against blasphemy. That of Massachusetts, for example, imposed a penalty of death. In the Body of Liberties, adopted in 1641, blasphemy and the worship of any but the true God appear in the catalogue of capital crimes. By an act of 1646 blasphemy was again made a capital offense, and whoever denied that any book of the Bible was the infallible Word of God might be whipped forty lashes and fined fifty pounds; on the second offense, he was to be put to death or banished. Down

in New Haven, saying that the Christian religion is a political device to keep ignorant men in awe was punishable with death.

The curbing of the wild and wayward younger generation seems to have required laws that were both harsh and strict. Thus, a Connecticut law provided that a child over sixteen years of age who was incorrigibly stubborn and rebellious should be put to death, and the same penalty was prescribed for the child who struck or cursed father or mother. The present writer has been unable to find, however, any case in which this penalty was actually applied.

No young man under twenty-one or young woman under eighteen was permitted to be out after nine o'clock at night without parental permission, and young people must not meet in company, unless for religious purposes, on Saturday or Sunday evening. What they might not do between these evenings is illustrated by a case in New London, Connecticut, in the year 1670, where John Lewis and Sarah Chapman were prosecuted for "sitting together on the Lord's Day under an apple tree in Goodman Chapman's orchard."

The several million people in the United States who own or ride in automobiles would be noticeably affected for at least one day in the week if the blue laws were revived. From Saturday at sunset till Monday morning the garage would be locked, with the

car inside. No unnecessary travel on the Sabbath would be permitted. In Connecticut, for instance, by a law passed as late as 1751, all justices of the peace were instructed to complain of persons whom they saw guilty of unnecessary travel on the Sabbath day, and all sheriffs, constables, grand jurymen, and tithingmen were required to watch for and arrest without need of any warrant all such offenders, or become themselves liable for neglect of duty. In Massachusetts, people were penalized for going beyond the town line to church if the church they attended was not the one approved by the lawmakers.

Even undertakers and burglars were supposed to stop work on the Sabbath. As late as 1771, in Massachusetts, a special permit had to be obtained if, by reason of the weather, it was not expedient to postpone a burial service till after the Sabbath; and even then the permit gave a warning to "take care that the corpse be not carried to the grave until an hour after sunset." As for the burglars, in some of the law codes — for instance, the New Haven Code of 1650 — the penalties for their offenses were stiffened if the crime occurred on the Sabbath. Thus even the crooks were almost coerced into "observing the Lord's Day."

Nor did the Sabbath calm stop here. It reached out forcibly to include not merely burglars but also the neighboring Indians, wild and tame, and even those

pets and guardians of the household, the incurably religious family dogs. The problem was, in places of public worship, to get the Indians in and keep the dogs out. As to the Indian half of this problem, James Truslow Adams tells us that the Puritans were gradually "forcing the 'protected' Indians to observe English law, even when living apart from the settlers. Such regulations as Connecticut passed for the Pequots on their reservation in the spring of 1675," says this authority, "were evidence of what all the protected Indians might expect in time. Any native, for example, heathen or Christian, who profaned the Sabbath day by hunting, fishing, carrying firewood, or other misdemeanors, was to be fined or whipped; while all were ordered to 'heare the word of God preached by Mr. Fitch, or any other minister sent amongst them,' subject to four shillings fine or corporal punishment." Thus even the birds, beasts, and fishes got a day off, while their Indian pursuers were enduring this holy confinement.

The Sunday discipline applied to the dogs shows them far superior to the small boys in at least one branch of Puritan godliness — eagerness to attend divine worship. Lacking immortal souls, however, they were, with certain exceptions, rigorously excluded from the spiritual advantages which were as rigorously forced upon the unwilling boys. It may be that the more intelligent of these dogs would have

profited by the lengthy discourse of the preacher almost as much as did some of his human auditors, but there were other things to consider. In the earnest pursuit of fleas, disturbing noises are often made. Moreover, of all those who slumbered during their devotions, only the dogs barked in their sleep. For these and other reasons, they were ruled out. W. R. Bliss, in his *Side Glimpses from the Colonial Meeting-House*, describes thus the efforts and arrangements made regarding them: —

"At New London (1662), one of the duties of the sexton was 'to order youth in the meeting-house and beat out dogs.' At Charlestown (1666), a man was hired at four pounds a year 'to ring the bell to meetings and to keep out dogs in meeting time.' At Dedham (1674), a man was paid eight shillings a year 'for keeping dogs out in meeting time and shutting the door.'

"Andover did not object to dogs, but made them pay for the privilege of coming to meeting. The law of this town (1672) said: 'Whatsoever dogs shall be in the meeting-house on the Sabbath day the owner thereof shall pay sixpence for every time.' At Medford (1745), ten shillings was the price of a ticket to 'any person who allows his dog to go into the meeting-house on the Sabbath day in the time of meeting.' At Provincetown (1775), the law was to pay half a dollar or kill 'every dog that comes into

the meeting-house on the Sabbath day.' At Abington (1793), those who took their dogs to meeting were ordered to pay 'the same fine as for a breach of the Sabbath.'

"The dog law of Redding (1662) was peculiar. It ran thus: 'Every dog that comes to the meeting either of Lord's day or lecture day, except it be their dogs that pays for a dog-whipper, the owner of those dogs shall pay sixpence for every time they come to the meeting that doth not pay the dog-whipper.' Twenty-six men wrote their names, or made their marks, in the Redding records, agreeing to 'pay the dog-whipper' to whip other people's dogs out of meeting, while their dogs remained and were recognized as members of the congregation in regular standing.

"Of course, boys and girls laughed, even at the risk of punishment by His Majesty's justice of the peace, to see the dog-whipper pursuing heterodox dogs when they were running up and down aisles and gallery stairs, yelping as his whiplash fell upon them, but determined like their masters to stay in meeting until 'ye exercise be ended.' "

A labor law enacted in 1633 in Massachusetts would create a deal of excitement if revived to-day. It provided that "all workmen shall work the whole day, allowing convenient time for food and rest." It was accompanied by another law, equally remarkable,

which said "that no person, householder or other, shall spend his time idly or unprofitably, under pain of such punishment as the Court shall think meet to inflict."

In this present age of motorized velocity, we should hardly suppose that seventeenth-century Boston would have needed a speed law. It is a fact, however, that the selectmen of that town struggled for a long time in vain against the speed demons who menaced the safety of life and limb on the public highways, till the colonial legislature at length came to the rescue and abated this nuisance by passing a special law inflicting a fine of three shillings and fourpence on anyone who galloped a horse in the streets of Boston.

Profanity under the old laws would be a bit more of a luxury than it is at present. The profane swearer was fined ten shillings for each man-sized oath, but if he used several such on the same occasion he was given a reduced, or wholesale, rate in his punishment. The statute provided that he who swore "more oaths than one at a time, before he removed out of the room or company where he so sware," should pay only twenty shillings. The "tythingmen," as the sleuths who spied on such vociferous ungodliness were called, were instructed to report all "Cursers and the Number as nere as they Can of their oaths." Whoever failed to pay these fines was set in the stocks.

The undesirable immigrant who made disparaging remarks about the admirable government was not let off with the penalty of mere deportation. It would be more nearly accurate to say that he was first punished on the spot, and then his remains were deported. Thus, in 1631, the General Court at Boston ordered "that Philip Ratliffe shall be whipped, have his eares cut off, fined 40 pounds, and banished out of the limits of this jurisdiction, for uttering malicious and scandalous speeches against the Government."

"Malicious and scandalous speeches" against individuals, as well as against the government, were punished with a heavy hand. The statute provided that "any lie, pernicious to the public weal, or tending to the damage or injury of any particular person, or with intent to deceive the people with false news and reports" should be penalized with fines, confinement in the stocks, and a public whipping as lengthy and severe as the facts warranted; nor did these punishments bar a further action for slander. Speeches that were merely irritating and abusive had a special penalty fixed for them. For "exorbitancy of the tongue in railing and scolding," the offender was to "be gagged or set in a ducking-stool and dipped over head and ears three times in some convenient place of fresh or salt water, as the court or magistrate should judge meet." Familiar though this ducking-stool punishment is, the present writer has found no

instance of its being inflicted anywhere in New England.

Two classes of persons of considerable prominence in the twentieth-century scheme of things were eyed with grave suspicion and disapproval in the seventeenth — bachelors and lawyers. The adult male who persisted in avoiding matrimony was regarded as, at best, a sort of slacker, at worst a menace to the morals of the community which gave him grudging shelter. He was carefully watched by the authorities, and his freedom of action was specially circumscribed. Thus Connecticut in 1636 forbade the young bachelor to keep house. In 1652, two bachelors in the town of Windsor obtained permission to keep house together, provided "they carry themselves soberly and do not entertain idle persons to the evil expense of time by day or night."

The Memorial History of Boston tells us that "there was but one lawyer in colonial Boston, and he had a sorry time of it. Thomas Lechford, of Clement's Inn, came to Boston in 1637. . . . He brought with him his knowledge of his profession, but both doctrinally and professionally he was regarded with suspicion. The magistrates . . . held it objectionable that lawyers should direct men in their causes. . . . Attorneys were discountenanced, though not actually forbidden, and a prisoner or suitor might plead his own cause, or a friend might appear in his behalf, but

not for a fee. Lechford, for going to a jury and pleading with them out of court, was 'debarred from pleading any man's cause hereafter unless his own, and admonished not to presume to meddle beyond what he shall be called to by the Court.' This one solitary case, in which the lawyer was employed for the prosecution of an action to recover under a will, snuffed out the advocate and left the Court as it had been." This lawyerless condition was not peculiar to Boston, however, nor even to New England. "Throughout all the colonies in the early period," says James Truslow Adams, "there was a general and rather likable prejudice against professional lawyers."

Apparently it was felt that the rough justice of those simple times did not greatly need the subtleties of the trained lawyer. What it lacked in subtlety this justice did, indeed, amply make up in roughness, at least so far as minor offences were concerned. Next to fines, the favorite punishment was public whipping, so frequently applied that the statutes which authorized it might, with some appropriateness, be renamed "the black-and-blue laws." Further mutilations of the body were provided for more serious offenses, these mortifications of the flesh being relied upon to beautify the spirits of both victim and spectators. Sufficient illustration will be provided by a few quotations from the diary of Joshua Hempstead,

which records the doings in and about New London, Connecticut, from 1711 to 1758: —

(June 1743) "Nathll Richards of Norwich was Convicted of Adultry with Samll Leffingwells wife Last feb."

"Nathll Richard of Norwich aged 50 was Whiped 25 Stripes & Branded on ye forehead with A on a hot Iron & a Halter put about his Neck and Sarah Leffingwell Aged 50 had the Same punishment &c Excepting but 23 Stripes."

(July 1733) "I was at home fore[noon]. aftern[oon] in Town at a Court of Probate & Judging a Sturdy Beggar. he was Whipt 15 Stripes at the N E Cornner of the Sheriffs fence."

(March 1727) "Wm Watkins an Irishman was Branded in ye forehead & had his Right Ear Cut of or Cropt for Burglary for breaking into Mr Chapmans house on the Sabath or lords day & Stealing a hatt Cloth's & money to ye vallue of 22 pounds wch he Restored & was also to pay ye Sd Lt Jere Chapman 44 pounds he to be Sold."

(September 1713) "I was in Town in ye forenoon to See a man Branded on ye forehead for breaking open a house in Lebanon & Stealing Sundrys &c."

Evidently the neighboring Indian tribes were sometimes allowed to execute their own criminals, after the Puritans had approved the penalty. Hemp-

Drawing by F. O. C. Darley

SOMETIMES THE "SCARLET LETTER" WAS DISPLAYED ON THE DRESS; SOMETIMES IT WAS BRANDED ON THE FOREHEAD

stead's diary records the following incident, under date of November 15, 1722: —

"I went with the Sheriff & Several more (vizt) 6 or 7 from Town & upward of 20 Horse from ye farms about Mohegan to see the Execution of Robin a Pequott Indian who was Conveyed from ye Prison here where he had been 7 or 8 months, to Mohegan & yr dd [there delivered] up to ye Mohegan Indians & there Shott Through ye Body by young Ben Uncas. itt was for Scalding old Ben's Sister in a drunken frollick."

In this godly commonwealth even the cows had to behave in somewhat orderly fashion, according to this diary; yet it seems to have been possible for the owner of a disorderly cow to shield her from the court's decreed penalty for a long while. Thus, under August 23, 1734, we read: —

"I was at home al day. in the foren wee kiled my old Wild Cow yt hurt me 5 year ago Last may, with her head Run att me & hitt me on the mouth & beat down 5 or 6 of my Teeth & other Enormities then & there did against the Peace &c & to the great disquietude of the Neighborhood; for which She was Sentenced to be Shot to death the first time She was fatt, who hath Ever Since been at Stonington & brot a Calf Every year till now & now was forward with Calf."

Cows, Indians, beggars, burglars, adulterers, and

many other ill doers, all suffered the roughness of Puritan justice. In that stern age of poverty and parsimony, the sins of idleness and thievery and wantonness were hideous and intolerable. Moreover, God and Heaven and Hell were imminent; hence the never-dying souls, of culprits and spectators alike, must be safeguarded and warned at whatever cost to mortal bodies. The laws were black-and-blue that the souls of men and women might be made white.

IX

THE SLEUTHS OF GOD AND THE ADVERTISEMENT OF CRIME

The rulers of seventeenth-century New England believed strongly in the strict enforcement of law, whether human or divine. Noting God's remarkable failure to compel obedience to His own laws, they seem to have decided to take this matter out of His hands, and to organize it on a more efficient basis. No doubt Calvinistic predestination taught that all the fruits of saving righteousness proceed directly from God's unalterable will, yet the Puritan conscience was urged by both hope and common sense to engage in the anticipatory cultivation of these precious fruits. As each cultivated the garden of his own soul, he sometimes looked over into that of his neighbor to discover any noxious weeds there, whence might be wafted back to him the seeds of damnation. Usually he discovered an alarming crop of just such deadly weeds, and henceforth devoted to them at least as much attention as he bestowed upon the fruits of his own little garden.

The efficient enforcement of God's laws involved three processes: (1) the detection of the violator; (2) his punishment; and (3) the advertisement of

the punishment, as a warning to others. The first step, then, was to build up a competent and devoted force of detectives. Auxiliary to this force were the constables, to make arrests, and the magistrates, to impose penalties, but prior to these, and more vital to the process of nabbing sinners in their sins, were the stealthy sleuths who ferreted out the wrong-doing. For the performance of this function, so essential to the enforcement of God's laws, there was gradually developed the office of tithingman.

The duties of this official seem to have passed through three stages. In the beginning he was a sort of Sunday policeman, to keep the children quiet and the grown-ups awake during church services. Later were added his peculiar functions as neighborhood sleuth and sniffer of ungodliness. Later still, when the neighbors grew tired of his intimate inspections, he shrank back into his Sunday job of defending churchly reverence against juvenile pranks and adult slumberings. The language of the statutes which created and enlarged this remarkable official is eloquent and enlightening.

The occasion for passing the law of 1654 in Massachusetts was the "much disorder in tyme of publicke ordinances, in the meeting howses . . . through unreverent carriage and behaviour of divers young persons and others." For the curbing of this intolerable ungodliness, the selectmen of the town and

the officers of the church were to appoint a kind of special policeman, who was to patrol the church service, bearing a "black staffe" two feet long, tipped at one end with brass and at the other with a squirrel's tail. With the brass end he prodded any brother who had slipped from worship into snoring, and with the squirrel's tail he tickled awake the sinful sleeping sisters. With the whole staff he sought to overawe, and sometimes belabored, "the wretched boys," and possibly now and then a froward girl.

Laws passed between 1675 and 1680 in this commonwealth gave this special policeman a title, that of "tything-man," and extended his duties throughout the week. "Tithing" was an old English term, meaning a division by ten, and applying to a group of ten men, at whose head was a "tithing man." Accordingly, the "tything-man" in New England was placed in charge of about ten families in his neighborhood, and these were sometimes called a "tything-man's squadron." Among these families he acted as dry agent and sin detective.

"And the select-men are hereby ordered," says the law, "to see to it that there bee one man appointed to inspect the ten families of his neighbors, which tything man or men shall & are hereby have power, in the absence of the constable, to app'hend all Saboath breakers & disorderly tiplers, or such as keep licensed houses, or others that shall suffer any dis-

orders in their houses on ye Saboath day, or evening after, or at any other time, & to carry them before a magistrate or other authority."

A later law (1679) enlarges the tithingman's duties and explains them more fully: —

"And the said tything men are required diligently to inspect all houses, licensed or unlicensed, where they shall have notice or have ground to suspect that any person or persons doe spend their time or estates, by night or by day, in tipling or gaming, or otherwise unproffitably, or doe sell by retayle, within doores or without, strong drincke."

He seems to have been given unlimited right of search, both for liquor and for sinful behavior, and the list of persons whom he was to spy upon was as long as his suspicious imagination chose to make it. It included all "stubborne and disorderly children & servants, night walkers, typlers, Saboath breakers, by night or by day, & such as absent themselves from the publicke worship of God on the Lords dayes, or whatever the course or practise of any person or persons whatsoever tending to debauchery, irreligion, prophaness, & atheisme among us."

After nine o'clock at night he was a traffic cop, keeping the streets as clear as possible. The law required him "to have a vigelent eye upon such Persons that shall without just and necessary cause be unseasonablie abroade in ye Evenings from their parents

The Sabbath Inspection of Taverns.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library

TYTHING MEN ARE REQUIRED DILIGENTLY TO INSPECT ALL HOUSES, LICENSED OR UNLICENSED . . .

& masters ffamielies all Persons being to repaire to their Lodgeings or homes by nine of ye Clocke at night or rather Before."

Other subjects of the tithingman's special attention were "all profane swears, and Cursers, and the Number as nere as they Can of their oaths; All such as are guilty of extortion; All such as Keep houses where unlawful Games are used & such as sell Drinke without Lycence; the names of such as live Idley without estates, Suspicious persons, Whores, night Walkers, mothers of Bastard Children; such as Commit Common Nuisances."

Apparently he sometimes worked on a commission basis, receiving a share of the fines imposed by the court upon his victims, and thus neatly combining the services of God and Mammon. Such a sharing arrangement is mentioned, for instance, in a case tried before the Essex County Court, in Massachusetts, during the session of November 1681: "The tythingman who prosecuted having his third of the fine," says the record.

Arrangements were made by which this stealthy inspector of public morals became also a purveyor of public amusement of a morbidly edifying sort. Before the days of traveling circuses and the parading of caged wild animals, the New England populace enjoyed the benefits of a semireligious substitute, no less diverting, perhaps, in the public display of caged

sinners whom the tithingman had captured in their sins. Thus, a Massachusetts law of 1677 provided that a cage should be placed in the Boston market place, and in such other towns as the county courts might designate, in which these criminals were to be on view.

"There is no record of any cage having been set up in Northampton," says J. R. Trumbull, in his *History of Northampton,* "though one was ordered by the court eighteen years afterward. These cages varied in size," continues this authority; "sometimes they were ten by sixteen feet and partly covered, though always barred on one or more sides. One was built at Portsmouth, 'twelve feet square, with stocks within it and a pillory on the top,' at a convenient space from the meeting house. Persons confined in them were exposed to the congregation, passing and repassing on Lecture days. Cages were in use till 1718."

Among the several kinds of sinners who were displayed in these cages were those who had attended Quaker religious services. An early seventeenth-century law of Plymouth, for instance, provides that the constable, after arresting such wicked persons, "shall forthwith carry them either into the stockes or Cage, whoe shall remaine there according to the discretion of the said Constable, provided if he put them into the stockes they shall not continew there above two houres if in winter nor above four houres

if in summer; and if hee put them Into the Cage they shall not continew there longer then untill night if in the winter; and not longer then the next morning in the summer."

Both the motives and the consequences of this and the numerous other methods by which crime was then advertised were probably mixed. As to motives: one was doubtless the double desire to humiliate the culprit and to warn the spectators. It may be, too, that the idea of "panem et circenses" was not wholly absent, at least in its "circenses" part. As a substitute for the forbidden "games," the public spectacle of sinners undergoing several kinds of torture was not so bad.

There was, after all, something rather charming about the sight of one's despised neighbor in a cage; and to see a business rival receive twenty-five lashes on his bared and bloody back must have been as stimulating as a bullfight. Moreover, the emotional release afforded the Boston mob that crowded about the hanging of a pirate was not very different from the fierce joy of the Roman amphitheatre when a hungry lion was punishing a Christian martyr.

Another reason for making the punishment of wrongdoers a public spectacle was the lack of adequate facilities for privacy in the matter. Consider one of the earliest cases, in Cambridge, Massachusetts; that of a certain James Woodward. James

Woodward had become thoroughly intoxicated and very disorderly. In fact he made such a riotous and ungodly disturbance that he had to be arrested; and that was how he created a problem for the "Newe-towne," as Cambridge was called when this breach of the peace occurred there, in the summer of 1632. The problem was what to do with him, or rather, where to put him. There was, alas, no jail. They had supposed they would need a church first, and had, therefore, spent their spare time and labor in building that at once; but James Woodward, staggering down the lane, whooping and cursing, called attention sharply to their mistake. The authorities soon solved the problem, however. If they could not bring their prisoner to a jail, they could at least bring a jail to their prisoner. The sentence they gave him reads thus: —

"James Woodward shall be sett in the bilbowes for being drunk at the Newe-towne."

The "bilbowes," or bilboes, were a pair of, not handcuffs, but footcuffs, which slid along a heavy bar of iron. Into these footcuffs the legs of James Woodward were inserted and locked with a padlock, and the whole contrivance, including James, was securely anchored to a stout post in the middle of the market square, right in front of the meetinghouse, so that everybody, excepting James, might enjoy the show. All who had any disparaging remarks to make

about the drunken Mr. Woodward were free to make them at this time, as they were also to hurl at him any products of the henyard or the garden which were unfit for other use.

So far as New England was concerned, the bilboes soon gave way to the more familiar device for holding fast a prisoner's hands as well as his feet — the stocks. In Boston, the first man to be thus boarded up for public exhibition was the very carpenter who built the contrivance.

"Edward Palmer," says the court record, "for his extortion in taking one pound, thirteen shillings, seven pence for the plank and woodwork of Boston stocks is fined five pounds & censured to bee sett an houre in the stocks."

Stocks were formed of two heavy timbers, the upper one of which could be raised, and, when lowered, was held in place by a lock. In these two timbers were cut two half-circle notches which met two similar notches when the upper timber was in place and thus formed round holes, holding firmly in place the legs of the imprisoned culprit, whose arms also were sometimes fastened into smaller holes similarly formed.

Occasionally even a woman sat in the stocks. Goody Gregory, of Springfield, in 1640 profanely abused a neighbor, using many manly oaths, of which the record quotes only, "Before God I could break thy

head." Since she swore like a man, she got a man's punishment and sat in the stocks.

The pillory was a more severe, and also a more aristocratic, punishment. It was an upright board, with a hole in which the victim's head was set fast, and usually with two openings, also, for the hands. Often the ears were nailed to the wood on either side of the head-hole.

Its use to punish a seventeenth-century election fraud offers, perhaps, a timely suggestion for solving present-day problems. The record tells us that in 1671 Mr. Thomas Withers, for "surriptisiously endeavoring to prevent the Providence of God by putting in several votes for himself as an officer at a town meeting," was ordered to stand two hours in the pillory at York, Maine.

This spectacular punishment was in use in Boston as late as the nineteenth century. In 1803, for instance, two men, who had sunk a ship at sea to defraud the underwriters, were sentenced to stand one hour in the pillory in State Street on two days, in addition to serving two years in prison.

In Boston, as elsewhere, the whipping post was in use from the earliest times. At the court session of November 30, 1630, a man was sentenced to be whipped for stealing a loaf of bread; another for shooting fowl on the Sabbath, and still another for swearing. Women, too, were thus chastised, but some-

times they were let off with a solemn public scare. Thus, on February 30, 1638, the following sentence was recorded: —

"Anne ux. [wife of] Richard Walker, being cast out of the church of Boston for intemperate drinking from one inn to another, and for light and wanton behavior, was the next day called before the governour and the treasurer, and convicted by two witnesses, and was stripped naked one shoulder, and tied to the whipping post, but her punishment was respited."

The whipping posts seem to have been located where they would furnish the greatest good, or evil, to the greatest number. Thus, Samuel Breck, of Boston, wrote in 1771: —

"The large whipping post painted red stood conspicuously and prominently in the most public street in the town. It was placed in State Street directly under the window of a great writing school which I frequented, and from there the scholars were indulged in the spectacle of all kinds of punishment suited to harden their hearts and brutalize their feelings. Here women were taken in a huge cage in which they were dragged on wheels from prison, and tied to the post with bare backs on which thirty or forty lashes were bestowed among the screams of the culprit and the uproar of the mob."

Perhaps even more severity, involving a lasting

publicity, was shown in the old devices for whipping, not the body, but the very soul of the offender. Nathaniel Hawthorne has made familiar the terrible "scarlet letter" which had to be worn conspicuously by those convicted of breaking the seventh commandment; but this was by no means the only insignia of iniquity that the law required. In 1656, a woman was sentenced to be whipped "at Taunton and Plymouth on market day," and forever after "to have a Roman B cutt out of redd cloth & sewed to her uper garment on her right arm in sight." The "B" stood for "Blasphemy." In 1638, John Davis of Boston was ordered to wear a red "V" on his "uppermost garment," the "V" for "Viciousness." What happened to habitual drunkards is shown by the case of Robert Coles, also of Boston. The court record says:—

"1634. Robert Coles, for drunkenes by him committed at Rocksbury, shal be disfranchized, weare about his necke, & so to hang upon his outward garment a D. made of redd cloth & sett upon white; to continyu this for a yeare, and not to have itt off any time hee comes among company, under the penalty of forty shillings for the first offence and five pounds for the second, & afterwards to be punished by the Court as they think meete, alsoe hee is to weare the D. outwards." This last clause doubtless aimed to prevent such evasions of the penalty as that of a woman who pinned her badge on an underpetticoat.

The advertisement of crime reached its grand climax, of course, in the hangings, to which there were also many solemn and edifying preliminaries. The trial of the criminal was a religious ceremony, opened with prayer by the judge, and concluded by him with a sermon, in which he pronounced the sentence and pointed the terrible moral. On the Sunday or the Thursday Lecture day before the execution, the condemned was taken to church and preached at, the enormity of his offenses and the torments of Hell that awaited him being the points of emphasis in the sermon. On the day set for his execution, he and his coffin were mounted on a cart and drawn along amid a vast parade of eager seekers after a solemn warning and a morbid thrill. The torturing suspense was prolonged for further preaching and praying. When at last the hangman and the prisoner brought the performance to its climax, the death agonies were accompanied by the hoarse shouts of brutal men, the shrieks of hysterical women, and the terrified cries of panic-stricken little children. Samuel Sewall says of one Boston hanging: "When the scaffold was let to sink, there was such a screech of the women that my wife heard it, sitting in our entry next the orchard and was much surprised at it; yet the wind was S. W. Our house is a full mile from the place."

These bloodcurdling and soul-purifying performances were attended by crowds whose numbers are

amazing when we consider the sparseness of population in those days, and the lack of both leisure and transportation facilities. Sewall says, of the crowd which witnessed a Boston hanging in 1704: "Many were the people I saw upon Broughton's Hill. But when I came to see how the river was covered with people I was amazed. Some say there were 100 boats. 150 boats and canoes saith Cousin Moody of York. He told [counted] them." This, however, was in the large town of Boston, with June weather and the execution of several notorious pirates to bring out the crowd. By comparison, the multitude that assembled in New London on a rainy day in November, to see a poor lone woman hung, is more remarkable, even though it did occur nearly half a century later. Joshua Hempstead's diary gives the following account of this latter occasion: —

(November 21, 1753) "in the aftern I Rid up to the Cross Highway above Jno Bolles to See Sarah Bramble Executed for the Murdering her Bastard Child in march last was a year Since. She was hanged at 3 Clock. a Crowd of Spectators of all Sexes & nations yt are among us from the neighbouring Towns as well as this. Judged to be Ten Thousand. it Rained moderately most of the day."

Sewall and Hempstead both register surprise, but not disapproval, at such widespread advertisement of crime and its awful consequenses. They seem to have

felt that it was a rather neat arrangement for combining moral uplift with pleasurable recreation; and they were representative of the best type of citizenship in their time. Nor did the best citizens of that day greatly resent the stealthy and prying ministrations of the meddlesome tithingman, as he coerced sinners into at least the outward appearance of godliness. With both of which ancient fashions in morality it is interesting to compare the modern.

X

ALCOHOL AND BOOTLEGGERS

EVERY law-regarding citizen to-day knows well enough that liquor becomes intoxicating just as soon as its alcoholic content passes the limit of one half of one per cent. Intoxicating liquor is thus comparatively easy to identify; but the same is not true, unfortunately, of the intoxicated person. We cannot put the matter in the form of a simple equation and say, for instance, twelve steins of one-per-cent beer equal one intoxication; human tunnage varies too widely for that. Judgment regarding drunkenness has to be based on external symptoms, rather than upon alcoholic content, and these, in turn, are somewhat difficult to define with satisfying precision.

Three centuries ago, in the little commonwealth of Plymouth, such a precise definition was nevertheless attempted, and it seems to have served well the purposes of a notoriously bibulous age. It includes four tests, one of which is divided into two parts, and all of which must be safely passed to establish the sobriety of a suspect.

"And by Drunkenness," it reads, "is understood a person that either lisps or faulters in his speech by

reason of overmuch drink, or that staggers in his going, or that vomitts by reason of excessive drinking, or cannot follow his calling."

However excellent this definition, it fell far short of solving the problem it described. As well try to prevent murder by describing the condition of a man who has been shot. The authorities in Boston, however, had a plan of their own for saving the victim before he was shot. A seafaring gentleman named Josselyn, who voyaged to New England in 1638, describes this plan, out of his own thirsty experience. He had entered the Puritan town with the clear intention of celebrating his safe arrival by becoming decently and appropriately drunk. Nevertheless, he remained severely sober, perforce, his potations being interrupted by authority before they had induced even a genial mellowness. Thirty-five years afterward, when time had softened the bitterness of his disappointment, he wrote the following account of the working of this prohibition law: —

"In 1637 there were not many houses in the Town of Boston, amongst which were two houses of entertainment called ordinaries, into which if a stranger went, he was presently followed by one appointed to that office, who would thrust himself into his company uninvited; and if he called for more drink than the officer thought in his judgment he could soberly bear away, he would presently countermand it, and ap-

point the proportion beyond which he could not get one drop."

Of course Josselyn was a stranger. Possibly one who knew the town a little better could have accomplished more. Some evidently did, for new laws were being passed frequently to catch up with the non-enforcement of the old ones. The preamble to a law of 1648 laments that "a great quantity of wine is spent and much thereof abused to excess of drinking and unto drunkenness itself, notwithstanding all the wholesome laws provided and published for the preventing thereof." A law of 1654 begins with the admission that "notwithstanding the great care this Court hath had and the laws made to suppress that swinish sin of drunkenness, and yet persons addicted to that vice find out ways to deceive the laws provided in that case."

Some of the laws prescribed a maximum alcoholic content, not for the drink, but for the drinker. Thus, one of them forbids tavern keepers to "suffer any to be drunk, or to drink excessively; viz. above half a pint of wine for one person at a time." There seem to have been, also, something like parking regulations for those who frequented drinking places. No one was permitted "to continue tippling above the space of half an hour, or at unseasonable times, or after nine of the clock at night." Another law prohibited the drinking of healths, "that abominable practice"

which led to so much "drunkenness, quarrelings, bloodshed, uncleanness, mispense of precious time." In 1651, dancing at inns was forbidden, "whether at marriages or not," and a little more than a decade later boisterous singing was likewise interdicted in such places, "this Court being sensible," says the statute, "of the great increase of profaneness amongst us, especially in the younger sort, taking their opportunity of meeting together in places of public entertainment to corrupt one another by their uncivil and wanton carriage, rudely singing and making a noise, to the disturbance of the family and other guests."

Drunkards must not be hidden from the authorities, to whom the right of search was allowed. Anyone "found drunken, so as to be thereby bereaved or disabled in the use of his understanding, appearing in his speech or gesture," was fined ten shillings, remaining in prison till he paid, or was to "be set in the stocks one hour or more, in some open place, as the weather would permit, not exceeding three hours."

Notwithstanding all these impediments to conviviality, it seems to have flourished a little more each year during the seventeenth century. Now and then the community was shocked by some alcoholic and noisy escapade, involving prominent citizens, even. Thus, Judge Sewall's diary, under date of September 3, 1686, relates the following: —

"Mr. Shrimpton, Capt. Lidget and others come

in a Coach from Roxbury about 9 aclock or past, singing as they come, being inflamed with Drink: At Justice Morgan's they stop and drink Healths, curse, swear, talk profanely and baudily to the great disturbance of the Town and grief of good people. Such highhanded wickedness has hardly been heard of before in Boston."

By the time the eighteenth century came in, however, not even the holy Sabbath day was safe from invasion by the disorders of tavern revelry and health drinking. In 1714, Judge Sewall himself fought a sort of rear-guard action against this advancing enemy of morals and religion, in attempting, rather half-heartedly it seems, to quell a jovial gathering of taverners, whose roistering had extended into the small hours of Saturday night — that is to say, until after nine o'clock. A law "for the better observation and keeping the Lord's Day" forbade under penalty of fine that any person should remain in a public house "drinking or idly spending his time on Saturday night, after the sun is set." This particular Saturday, however, happened to be the Queen's birthday, the proper celebration of which required the consumption of much good liquor, and some of the celebrators had apparently not begun early enough in the day to complete the patriotic duty within the time allowed by the Puritanic law. In this case of conflicting loyalties, their love for the good

queen, and the good liquor, prevailed. Sewall and his associates tried to enforce the law.

"My neighbour Colson knocks at our door about 9. or past," says Judge Sewall's diary, "to tell of the Disorders at the Tavern at the South-end in Mr. Addington's house, kept by John Wallis. He desired me that I would accompany Mr. Bromfield and Constable Howell thither. It was 35. Minutes past Nine at Night before Mr. Bromfield came; then we went. I took Æneas Salter with me."

Setting out at this ungodly hour, they presently arrive at the scene of the disorder.

"Found much Company," continues the diary. "They refused to go away. Said were there to drink the Queen's Health, and they had many more Healths to drink. Call'd for more Drink: drank to me, I took notice of the Affront, to them. Said must and would stay upon that Solemn occasion."

A spirit of maudlin defiance inspired the lawless revelers. "Mr. John Netmaker drank the Queen's Health to me. I told him I drank none; upon that he ceased. Mr. Brinley put on his Hat to affront me. I made him take it off. I threaten'd to send some of them to prison; that did not move them. They said they could but pay their Fine, and doing that they might stay. I told them if they had not a care, they would be guilty of a Riot. Mr. Bromfield spake of raising a number of Men to Quell them, and was in

some heat, ready to run into Street. But I did not like that. Not having Pen and Ink, I went to take their Names with my Pensil, and not knowing how to Spell their Names, they themselves of their own accord writ them. Mr. Netmaker, reproaching the Province, said they had not made one good Law."

For this last disrespectful remark, Mr. Netmaker was sent to jail, even though he was private secretary to the general-in-chief of the Queen's armies. It was persuasion, however, rather than coercion, that finally dispersed the Sabbath-breaking topers.

"At last I address'd my self to Mr. Banister," writes Judge Sewall. "I told him he had been longest an Inhabitant and Freeholder, I expected he would set a good Example in departing thence. Upon this he invited them to his own House, and away they went; and we, after them, went away. . . . I went directly home, and found it 25. Minutes past Ten at Night when I entred my own House."

Probably the "wetness" of early New England surpassed anything we are familiar with even in these days of illicit dampness. Demon Rum had there established his tight little kingdom. He it was who, in the form of "groaning beer," cheered those who welcomed the newborn babe into the world. At its baptism he made fragrant the breaths of those who celebrated this solemn event. When the child grew up and married, it was rum that added a liquid,

and often unseemly, hilarity to the festivities; and when at last the sad funeral rites were to be performed, rum sometimes brought a surprising cheerfulness to the hearts of the mourners, a perilous unsteadiness to the limbs of the pallbearers, and a shocking irregularity to the utterances of the minister. "Drinking, even to the point of intoxication, at funerals became such a scandal," says Professor Charles M. Andrews, "that ministers in New England thundered at the practice from the pulpit."

That the ministerial thunder did not more often reverberate in this matter was due, perhaps, to the fact that so many ministers were habitually filled with the spirit that did not proceed directly from God. It seems clear, at any rate, that heavy drinking characterized the pulpit hardly less than the pew. This fact is brought out by such items as the following, from Cotton Mather's diary, March 18, 1711: —

"Shall I not do well to write a Letter unto one or two of the principal Ministers in Connecticut–Colony; concerning the fearful circumstances into which the Love of Rum, has brought several, even of their principal Ministers, and by Consequence very many of the miserable People? And awaken them to dispense their laweful Admonitions? The Consequences of the affected Bottel, in that Colony, as well as in ours, are beyond all Imagination."

Concerning the laity's intemperance, Mather had

noted, more than a dozen years earlier, that "a flood of excessive drinking, hath begun to drown very much of Christianity, yea, and of Civility itself, in many places." That the members of his church were sometimes involved in this continuing scandal is evidenced by such items as the following, from his diary and from his manuscript records of the Second Church: —

"This Day upon the Testimony of many Witnesses, Mr. William Coleman was convicted of Revelling and of Drunkenness, with a scandalous Company routed by the Watch and other Officers about the Middle of the Night, between the 9th and the 10th Instant. The Revelling hee confessed; the Drunkenness he denied. In the whole he showed such Insensibility (and the Church was also satisfied, that hee had of late in other Instances abandoned himself to a disorderly Life), that the Church now agreed for his being laid under the Censure of an Admonition; which was now accordingly dispensed unto him."

"Whereas it appears that Henry Dawson has been guilty of scandalous Drunkenness, accompanied with strong and strange Impoenitency, and has refused this Day to attend upon the Church, when it was demanded of him; it shall be signified unto him, that if he do not in a Month's time attend the Church, with Expressions of Submission and Repentance, the Church will proceed in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Christ to pass the highest Censure upon him." A week later, the defiant and dissolute Henry yields, and comes to take his disciplining. "This day," says the record, "Henry Dawson appeared before the Church, expressing Sorrow, both for his Drunkenness and for the Obstinacy and Rebellion against the Church, which he show'd in his not appearing a week ago. But it being evident that he had aggravated his crimes by going to extenuate them with Shuffling and lying Evasions, and that he had indulged himself in too much of a Course of Excessive Drinking, and it being also generally complained that Idleness and Company-keeping and Promise-breaking, and evil-speaking, had been too much the Character of his Conversation, the Church laid him under the Censure of an Admonition, which the Pastor now dispensed unto him."

"Nathanael Shaw, having been convicted of many Scandals, as being 1. a notorious evil-company-keeper; and 2. given up to Gaming, and Idleness, and Neglect of his Calling, with his evil company; and 3. often omitting the worship of God in his Family; and 4. being frequently drunk; but now fled out of the province; the Church this day laid him under Censure, and agreed that a solemn Admonition should be sent after him."

"Mary Cox, having abandoned herself to a course of Drunkenness and other scandalous Impieties and

Enormities, which have procured her to be sent unto the work-house as a disorderly Liver, she had this day the Censures of the Church passed upon her, and was cut off from her standing among the Disciples and in the visible Kingdome of the Lord."

"Sarah Bushnel, having been scandalously overtaken with the Sin of Drunkenness, her Confession and Repentance was this Day offered to the Church and accepted."

"David Norton, having been overtaken with a scandalous degree of Drunkenness, the Church this day accepted his poenitent and ingenuous Confession."

Some there were who drank too much, and yet escaped discipline. Such are evidently referred to by the anxious Mather in the following pastoral notes: —

"I am given to understand, that among the Communicants of the Church under my Charge, there are several wicked People. Some that frequently drink to Excess. . . ."

"There are some old Professors of Religion in my Neighborhood, that are fallen into the Way of drinking to Excess. Their Intoxications begin to be observed; there is Danger lest they hasten upon themselves Rebukes and Censures from the Church of God; and their Souls are in the mean time horribly wounded. I would consult with some discreet

and pious Neighbours, the best way to admonish them, so as to recover them."

Where good and lawful liquor flowed in such evident profusion as it did in New England of the seventeenth century, it might seem that the bootlegger would be superfluous. He was, nevertheless, actively present, and in some respects he occupied a more favorable position than that of his modern successors. To be sure, the blessings of prohibition in that early period were confined to the Indians, but this narrowing of the field for lucrative lawbreaking was somewhat offset by the lawmakers' apparent intention to penalize more severely the heathen savage who bought and drank the fiery water than the Christian gentleman who sold it to him.

At first our bibulous forefathers did not have the heart, apparently, to deny the savage thirst, and renounce the money profit therefrom; hence, in 1644, they passed the following law: —

"The court apprehending that it is not fit to deprive the Indians of any lawful comfort which God alloweth to all men by the use of wine, do order that it shall be lawful for all such as are or shall be allowed license to retail wines, to sell also to the Indians so much as may be fit for their needful use or refreshing."

This law worked very badly. The Indian's idea of "so much as may be fit for their needful use or

refreshing" was such a quantity as would make him gloriously drunk, and he soon found out that brandy would serve the purpose much more effectively than wine.

A contemporary eyewitness writes: "A man can hardly have a greater desire of a thing than the Indians have of brandy. I have heard them say that to die by drinking brandy, was a desirable and an honorable death; and indeed 'tis no very uncommon thing to kill themselves by drinking this liquor to excess." Frequently, however, the brandied Indian did not confine the killing to himself, and the resulting rise in the Puritan death rate was followed by the enactment of a new law on the liquor question.

This statute, of 1657, forbade the sale of every kind of strong drink to the Indians "under penalty of 40s. [shillings] for one pint, and so proportionately for greater or lesser quantities." Henceforth the only legal method by which the thirsty savage could procure Puritan firewater was that of convincing both a physician and a magistrate that he was desperately sick, whereupon he might be allowed one dram. This allowance was, of course, but a shallow mockery, then as now. Thus a lively illicit trade sprang up, the most interesting feature of which was the penalty inflicted on the Indian purchaser. James Truslow Adams describes the situation as follows: —

"A most unjust law, in view of the well-

understood inability of the Indian to withstand the temptation of strong waters, and the willingness of the colonists, in spite of legal prohibition, to sell them to him, was that which provided that any native found drunk should have to labor twelve days for whoever accused him and proved the case, one half of the proceeds of his labor to go to the accuser, and one half to the county treasury. It was only necessary, therefore, secretly to induce a savage to take one or two drinks, in order to secure six days' forced labor from him gratis."

In league with an employer of labor, the bootlegger could, therefore, count on not merely the legitimate profits of his lawbreaking, but also an illegitimate additional profit from the forced labor involved in the law's enforcement against the drunken Indian!

After nearly half a century of this prohibition, the lawless liquor traffic with the Indians in Massachusetts was a scandal so notorious that Cotton Mather was asked to, and did, publish a tract in condemnation of it. His diary says, under date of March 16, 1700: —

"A Gentleman comes to me, with a Desire that I would write a Sheet upon the horrid Evil of debauching the Indians by selling Drink unto them; a Crime committed by too many in the Countrey; a Crime fruitful in Wickedness and Confusion; I answered

his Desire; and it is published under the Title of, A MONITORY AND HORTATORY LETTER UNTO THOSE ENGLISH WHO DEBAUCH THE INDIANS BY SELLING STRONG DRINK UNTO THEM. It seems this Letter is like to do more Good than I at first imagined," concludes the reverend gentleman, hopefully.

Such hopefulness suggests a certain closeness of spiritual kinship between Mather and us moderns, as his age was evidently somewhat akin to ours, in spirit.

XI

"SO WIKEDNES . . . STOPPED BY STRICT LAWS . . . AT LAST BREAKS OUT" — WITH POLICE-COURT CONSEQUENCES

Efforts of the early New England fathers to stop wickedness by means of strict laws met with indifferent success. They were more ready to admit this than some of their modern descendants have been. Governor Bradford, for instance, in his history "of Plimoth Plantation," shows us the governors of Massachusetts and Plymouth, respectively, seeking each other's advice on how to deal with the rising crime wave as early as the year 1642.

Lest someone suppose that the crimes thus referred to were merely such things as staying home from church or kissing a wife on the Lord's Day, an enlightening quotation from the Bradford History is here given: —

"Marvilous it may be to see and consider how some kind of wickedness did grow & breake forth here, in a land wher the same was so much witnessed against, and so narrowly looked unto, & severly punished when it was knowne. . . . And yet all this could not suppress ye breaking out of sundrie notorious sins, (as this year, besids other, gives us too many sad

presidents [precedents] and instances,) espetially drunkennes and unclainnes; not only incontinencie betweene persons unmaried, for which many both men & women have been punished sharply enough, but some maried persons allso. But that which is worse, even sodomie and bugerie, (things fearfull to name,) have broak forth in this land, oftener than once. . . .

"But to proceede; ther came a letter from ye Govr in ye Bay [Massachusetts] to them here, touching matters of ye forementioned nature, which because it may be usefull I shall hear relate it, and ye passages ther aboute."

The letter from the Governor of Massachusetts is then given. It begins as follows: —

Sr: Having an opportunitie to signifie ye desires of our Generall Court in toow [two] things of spetiall importance, I willingly take this occasion to imparte them to you, yt [that] you may imparte them to ye rest of your magistrats, and also to your Elders, for counsell; and give us your advise in them.

"The first is concerning heinous offences in point of uncleannes; the perticular cases, with ye circomstances, and ye questions ther upon, you have hear inclosed. . . .

Your loving friend,

Ri. Bellingham.

Boston, 28. (1) 1642.

"The note inclosed follows on ye other side," continues Governor Bradford's historical narrative. This last statement is no longer true, however. The mod-

ern editor explains why, in a note at the bottom of the page. "A leaf is here wanting in the original manuscript," he says, "it having been cut out." Apparently somebody decided that here were things about the deeds of our Massachusetts ancestors that their posterity would better not read.

Nobody, however, succeeded in making away with those pages of the Bradford History in which the case of one Thomas Granger, a youth of seventeen years, is described in horrifying and unrepeatable detail. "Horrible it is to mention," adds the illustrious governor-historian, "but ye truth of ye historie requires it." Happily the modern historian usually spares his more refined readers the disgust of reading such loathsome details; yet in so doing he probably fails sometimes to portray an adequate picture of the evils of bygone days, and thus to place them in their true perspective with the easily seen evils of the present day. Though occasionally offensive, it is, none the less, revealing to call a spade a spade, lest some loyally prejudiced person mistake it for a spire or other high and holy ornament.

"It may be damanded how came it to pass," continues Governor Bradford, "that so many wicked persons and profane people should so quickly come over into this land, & mixe them selves amongst them? seeing it was religious men yt [that] began ye work, and they came for religions sake." This ques-

tion seemed to worry the Governor so much that he attempted to answer it. "I confess this may be marvelled at," he says, "at least in time to come, when the reasons thereof should not be knowne. . . . I shall therfore indeavor to give some answer hereunto."

His answer is a somewhat humiliating one for all those descendants whose pedigrees in New England start later than the date of the landing of the Mayflower. It is, in two words, "undesirable immigrants," referring, of course, only to those who had arrived before 1642, the date of his writing. They were, in his judgment, a bad lot. Some came in response to the demand for laborers, the earliest settlers gladly taking anybody they could get to work for them: "such as wanted help in yt respecte, when they could not have such as yey [they] would, were glad to take such as they could; and so, many untoward servants" were brought over. Secondly, the transportation companies brought over anybody who could pay, or arrange for, his or her passage money. "And by this means the cuntrie became pestered with many unworthy persons." Lastly, the ne'er-do-wells and the dissolute were hopefully shipped over from the Old World by their more or less loving friends: "so allso ther were sente by their freinds some under hope yt they would be made better; others that they might be eased of such burthens, and they kept from shame

at home yt would necessarily follow their dissolute courses." After considering this motley horde of undesirables, one wonders that New England managed to survive at all, in whatever state of corruption, and no surprise is felt at the Governor's gloomy remark in conclusion: "And thus, by one means or other, in 20. years time, it is a question whether ye greater part be not growne ye worser."

Legislating into righteousness such faulty human material was uphill work. Many splendid successes were no doubt attained. There were also many outstanding failures. We refrain from any detailed noting of certain failures, mentioned in all sorts of records. The missing page from Governor Bellingham's letter may be taken as an indication of their shocking character. In commenting on some of the dark sins here passed over, Governor Bradford, in his history of Plymouth, insists that they are largely the result of a very special spitefulness on the part of the Devil, stirred to such extraordinary animosity by Puritan virtue. He urges also that these evils are not really more numerous in New England than elsewhere, but, indeed, less so; their prominence being due to the fact that here nearly all of them are brought to light and punished, whereas elsewhere they escape detection and shameful advertisement.

He gives also another explanation, so much more plausible that this chapter must include it.

"An other reason may be," says this governor-historian, "that it may be in this case as it is with waters when their streames are stopped or dammed up, when they get passage they flow with more violence, and make more noys and disturbance, than when they are suffered to rune quietly in their owne chanels. So wikednes being here more stopped by strict laws, and ye same more nerly looked unto, so as it cannot rune in a commone road of liberty as it would, and is inclined, it searches every wher, and at last breaks out wher it getts vente."

The items that follow illustrate the consequences when some of the mentionable forms of "wickednes" broke out.

If we may believe the court records of Essex County, Massachusetts, for the year 1637, we must conclude that Dorothy Talbie was by no means the docile and submissive person that a seventeenth-century New England housewife is commonly supposed to have been. Poor old John Talbie, her defenseless husband, was a scarred monument to her domestic ferocity. The magistrates of the commonwealth she had lashed only with her tongue, but a single glance at John sufficed to show that him she had assailed with fists, claws, and kitchen furniture. The court, when appealed to, decreed as follows: —

"John Talbie's wife, Dorothy, for frequent laying hands on her husband to the danger of his life, and

contemning authority of the court, to be chained to a post."

How long this disorderly matron was to remain "chained to a post" the record does not tell us. Apparently it was not long enough, for in the following year the court again ordered a punishment for her: —

"Dorothy, wife of John Talbie, whipped for misdemeanors against her husband."

This shocking record of domestic infelicity must not, of course, be taken as typical of the New England home of three centuries ago. The courts dealt with the worst cases only. Nevertheless, the unsubmissive and brutally mannish Dorothy Talbie is by no means an isolated vixen in the records of those good old times when there was almost no divorce and woman's place was in the home. In addition to those wives who beat only their own husbands, there were some who took on also antagonists outside the domestic circle. A glimpse of only one of these surprising matrons in action will illustrate amply.

"Mary, wife of Andrew Tucker," says the court record, "for abusing Leonard Belringer, was fined." Precisely what happened to Leonard is thus related in the testimony: A witness "testified that he saw Mary, wife of Andrew Tucker, strike Belringer, and deponent carried him out of doors. She came out and took him by the hair of his head and pulled him to the ground upon the stones that paved the yard,

beating his head upon the stones until Anna Gilberd bade deponent take Belringer away before her dame killed him. Sworn in court." . . . Concerning another occasion "Mary Searle, aged about twenty years, deposed that, hearing the fray, she ran out of her house and saw Mary Tucker pulling out Belringer's hair and was about to put it in her pocket. Deponent told her that she was not acting like a Christian to pull a man's hair off, whereupon she flung the hair away. Sworn in court."

The unladylike behavior of Goodwife Tucker and Goodwife Talbie should not, however, lead us to believe that the family brute of seventeenth-century New England was usually the wife. It was, of course, more often the husband; witness an illustration in the case of Richard Prey, reported in the court records for January 18, 1647: —

"Jabish Hackett deposed that, sojourning at house of Rich. Prey, he often heard Prey call his wife jade and roundhead, and curse her, wishing a plague and a pox on her, and especially after Richard Prey came home from meeting last Lord's day, having beaten her that day. . . . Also being at supper one evening, one Thomas Wiggines spoke to Prey about cursing and swearing upon a Lord's day when he and his wife stayed at home from meeting. Prey answered that it was a lie, and his wife reminding him of his previous actions, Prey took his porridge dish

and threw it at her, hitting her upon the hand and wrist, so that she feared her arm was broken. Some one present told Prey that the court would not allow him to abuse his wife so, and he answered that he did not care for the court and if the court hanged him for it he would do it. It was said to him that the court would make him care, for they had tamed as stout hearts as his, and Prey answered that if ever he had trouble about abusing his wife, he would cripple her and make her sit on a stool, and there he would keep her."

Such unhappy couples as the Preys had no lawful way of escaping from each other. A divorce was practically unattainable, and, if they began to live apart without one, the court would probably require them to live together again. A certain William Flint seems to have managed such an escape, however, through the extraordinary authority over him exercised by his mother. He was haled into court, but promptly acquitted, as the following record shows: —

"William Flint presented for not living with his wife. Answer: his mother was not willing to Lett his wyfe come. Quit."

The wife in question seems to have accepted her mother-in-law's decision with all meekness; but not all mothers-in-law enjoyed such authority and respect. For instance: —

"Mary, the wife of Richard Prey, being convict

before the court for that shee should say to her mothr in lawe 'Get you whom [home] yow old hogge; get you whom;' and withall threw stones at her."

Such disrespect, even for a mother-in-law, evidently was somewhat dangerous, but not so dangerous as disrespect for preachers and magistrates or even for the brethren of the church. The mildly disrespectful were sometimes let off without a penalty. Thus, in 1643: —

"Mr. Henrie Walton of Lynn presented for saying that 'he had as Leeve to hear a Dogg Barke as to heare Mr. Cobbett Preach.' Quit."

This, of course, was largely a matter of taste, and some dogs do, indeed, bark in a manner very pleasant to hear; but whenever really insulting remarks about the ministry were made, something unpleasant was likely to happen to the insulter. For example take the case of Goodwife Olever, tried in 1646: —

"Wife of Thomas Olever, for saying that all ministers in the country were bloodthirsty men, to be tied to the whipping post with a slit stick on her tongue."

Thirty-five years later it was much the same, when "Luke Perkins, for base words against the minister, was sentenced to be whipped. . . . Presented for saying that Mr. Cobit was more fit to be in a hogsty than in a pulpit, and that he had been a vile man in his former days."

Making uncomplimentary remarks about the governor, too, was very much more dangerous in the seventeenth century than it is to-day. If all such offences were dealt with as severely as that of Mary Oliver, hereinafter described, it really must have been hard for the governor to find out what the people thought of him. The court record says: —

"Mary Oliver, presented for speaking against the Governor, saying he was unjust; sentenced to be whipped next lecture day at Salem, if the weather be moderate, not exceeding twenty stripes."

Likewise, remarks in disparagement of the authorities in general led to penalty, but this might be made more lenient if the culprit apologized humbly enough. Thus: —

"John Allen, convicted of and having confessed to notorious and barbarous speeches against authority, the court, judging it their duty to bear witness against such sinful practices, fined him, much favor being shown him on account of his free confession." Allen had said: "I tell you this countrey is Ruled by Red hedid curs and Red heded dogs and Red hedid Rogs [rogues]." His petition to the court for mercy is a bit nauseating, as such petitions often were in this time, because its penitence smacks strongly of hypocrisy. Thus: "I owne and I pray god to forgive me, for I do Acknowledge I have done Exceedingly wickedly. . . . I have causelessly and wickedly

abused the Honoured Gentlemen. . . . I was under the Temptation of my Corrupt Base Nature. . . . But I houpe this Honord Court will be pleased to extend charity to me and my Case and Take my word that I never more will by the help of God do any more So Wickedly. So Humbley Submiting myselfe to the Good will and pleasure of God and your Honours Marcy: I subschribe my selfe, though not worthey to be so Called by Reason of this Great Misdemeanor, Your honours moast Inferiour Servant to Command Upon all occasions to my Utmost Power."

Anybody who chose to dislike the Puritan brethren or the church which they faithfully attended was at liberty to do so, but he would better keep quiet about it: —

"Richard Window of Gloucester was fined for cursing, saying, 'These are the brethren, the divill scald them.' "

And again: —

"Joseph Fowlar to sit in stocks one hour and a half or pay a fine for saying there were seven or eight liars in the church, 'and if one would lye soundly he was fitt for the church.' "

The genial humorist, also, must have had a rather chilly time of it among our Puritan ancestors. He might be permitted to crack a few jokes now and then, if there were no other blots on his record of

godliness, but he must choose carefully the subjects for his jests. If by some ill chance he trod on anybody's pet theological corn, he was lucky to get off with only a stern reproof. Any levity about the ceremony of baptism, for instance, would get the joker into hot water forthwith. In 1644, we find: —

"John and Stephen Talbie admonished for unbecoming speeches about a dog in the water, though not proved the baptizing of him."

A little later: —

"George Harding of Marblehead, fisherman, for saying that next year he intended to be a member [of the church] and would then have his dog christened, to pay fine or be whipped."

Too much liveliness of spirit was thus frowned upon. Too little was also objected to. To get yourself brought before the magistrate, all you had to do was to go to sleep — in the wrong time and place: —

"Jeffery Esty admonished for much sleeping on the Lord's days in time of exercise."

"Roger Scott of Lynn presented for common sleeping at public exercise on Lord's day, and for striking him who awaked him."

After the somewhat lengthy service of worship was ended, the gossip of the week was quickly taken up and discussed with great animation, sometimes with considerable heat. Cases are in the court record where matrons of the congregation engaged in un-

seemly quarrels on such occasions, and even came to blows: —

"Gertrude, wife of Henry Pease, and Elizabeth, wife of John Legge, presented for scandalous falling out on a Lord's day."

Again, in 1649: —

"Lidia, wife of Robert Gutch, fined for striking Johanna Conant in the meeting house on the Lord's day."

The meetinghouse had many and varied uses. In addition to its regular use for worship, sleeping, and gossip, and its occasional use for quarreling and fighting, it was sometimes employed as a hall of punishment for wrongdoers. In 1681: —

"Elizabeth, wife of Luke Perkins, presented for most opprobrious and scandalous words of a high nature against Mr. Cobbit and her husband's natural parents and other relations of his, which was proved, court ordered that in order that due testimony might be borne against such a virulent, reproachful, and wicked-tongued woman, she be severely whipped on the naked body, and to stand or sit the next lecture day in some open place in the public meeting house at Ipswich during the whole time of the exercise with a paper pinned on her head on which is written in capital letters, 'FOR REPROACHING MINISTERS, PARENTS AND RELATIONS.' By payment of 3li. the corporal punishment was respitted."

In the same year, a like penalty was imposed upon persons guilty of incest: —

"At the next lecture day at Salem they were to stand or sit upon a high stool during the whole time of the exercise in the open middle alley of the meeting house, with a paper upon each of their heads, with their crime written in capital letters."

The employment of such public and spectacular punishments, including many cases of public whippings, is commonly regarded as an indication that the Puritan fathers believed that it pays to advertise, crime no less than piety. Instead of hiding their criminals away in prisons, they chose to display the shame and suffering of these wretches as a solemn warning to the tempted. Probably they were considerably influenced, also, by the fact that this method of dealing with crime seemed the most economical one for the taxpayer. The favorite penalty was a fine, and this yielded a considerable revenue. Next came whipping, which involved very little expense of housing and feeding the convict. Imprisonment seems to have been rare and brief, and one of the reasons for this is suggested by the following affidavits submitted to the Essex County Quarterly Courts in 1680: —

"Josiah Gatchell testified that he knew Salem prison was not sufficient, for any man having no instrument except his own hands could come out as he pleased. He was also at Ipswich when Erasamon James

had two men to view that prison, and the keeper locked in two men, who came out without the doors being unlocked. He saw one man pull up one of the boards overhead in the prison with his hand, going into the chamber of the prison, and others went out under the groundsill and some went out next the watch house." Inspectors declared, "They found not one room there that was sufficient to keep in a man who had the dexterity of an ordinary man." The warden testified that he had received a prisoner and "locked him into the strongest room in Ipswich prison. In thirty-six hours he had broken prison, without any apparent help by man or implement."

Prisons of this sort could not have been very costly to build, and they seem to have been worth still less than their cost. They were, however, a powerful argument in favor of public and spectacular punishments that involved little or no detention.

In so far as crimes and misdemeanors were detected and brought to court, the records indicate which were the favorite forms of wrongdoing indulged in by the less upright of our forefathers and foremothers. On the basis of their mention in the quarterly court records and files for Essex County, Massachusetts, during the years 1680, 1681, and 1682, the relative frequency of the leading brands of lawlessness is indicated approximately in the following list: —

Offense	Times Mentioned
Fornication	34
Debt	32
Drunkenness	18
Trespass	14
Theft	11
Beating Another (assault)	9
Breach of the Sabbath	6
Living Away from Wife	5
Lying	5
Swearing	5
Running Away from Master	4

Concerning the offense last mentioned, it was the indentured servant who did the running away. He, or she, was the man or woman, boy or girl, who was bound for a specified term of years to serve whoever, by purchase, became the owner of the services. The manner in which this system duplicated in New England some of the atrocities connected with negro slavery in the South is illustrated by the following extracts from the court records of 1681 and 1682: —

"Philip Fowler was presented for abusing his servant, Richard Parker, and although court justified any person in giving meet correction to his servant, which the boy deserved, yet they did not approve of the manner of punishment given in hanging him up by the heels as butchers do beasts for the slaughter, and cautioned said Fowler against said kind of punishment."

"John Grant, aged about twenty-two years, deposed that living at Simmons' house he had seen the latter beat Bettys [an unruly indentured servant] so that he fainted. Also that at one time he tied him to a cradle, having pulled off all his clothes to his shirt, and whipped him with three cords tied to a stick so that he brought blood, while he asked the boy if he loved him. The boy said yes and he beat him again."

As to swearing and lying, the next higher items in our list, their relative position in the contemporary scale of moral turpitude is suggested by the fines which penalized them: —

"Richard Praye fined 10s. [shillings] for swearing; 10s. for cursing; 20s. for beating his wife; and 40s. for contempt of court."

"Quinton Pray and his wife fined 50s. for five oaths. Fined 20s. for two lies."

"Marke Symonds fined 10s. for one lie and 5s. each for three other untruths, and 5s. for railing."

It would appear, therefore, that one who sought forty shillings' worth of emotional release might choose among several desirable alternatives: thus, he might express his real opinion of the court just once, or beat his wife twice; release four long-suppressed oaths or utter several lies (four black ones or eight mere "untruths"); or, finally, he might indulge in eight rounds of ribald railing. Notwithstanding the higher value of money in those days, these figures

(XV.)

Off. Any Man being found in Bed with another mans Wife. p. 65

Pen. Both Man and Woman severely Scourged, (not exceeding Thirty Stripes.)

Unless it appear that one party was meerly surprized, and consented not; and then the Punishment of that party Abated.

Adultery Committed. p. 65.

Convicted before the Justices of Assize, both Man and Woman to be set on the Gallowes an Hour, with a Rope about their Neck, and the other end cast over the Gallowes. And in the way from thence to the common Gaol, to be Scourged, not exceeding Forty Stripes. And forever after to wear a Capital A. of two Inches long, of a contrary Colour to their Cloathes, sewed on their upper Garments, on the Back or Arm, in open view. And as often as they appear without it, openly to be Scourged, not exceeding Fifteen Stripes.

(XVI.)

Off. The Party alive, the former Husband or Wife, being alive; (unless they have been absent for Three years, and in this Term have not heard of yet earlier.)

And except in Case of Divorce, or where the Marriage has been declared Void; or been made under the Age of Consent. p. 66.

Explanation 1942

Pen. Death, as in Cases of Felony; in whatever County the Offender is apprehended.

Courtesy of the Essex Institute

TWO PAGES FROM "AN ABSTRACT OF THE LAWES IN THE PROVINCE OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY." BOSTON 1704

would seem to indicate that the well-to-do classes, at least, had relatively free speech, or rather that speech, if not altogether free, was comparatively inexpensive.

The startling fact about the list of crimes and misdemeanors given above is that the offense most often mentioned is fornication, even though almost the only cases of this sort that appear in the court records are those involving the birth of a child. If the guilty persons were married before the child was born, the penalty was usually a fine only; if they were still unmarried, both fine and a public whipping, occasionally as alternatives, were commonly adjudged against them. Sometimes the accused plead for mercy on the ground that they were "engaged to be married with the consent of their parents" at the time the offense occurred. Of the cases here listed, however, the greater number involved neither marriage nor any evident intention thereof. There is some evidence to show that the court's chief anxiety in the matter was to save the town from the expense of supporting the illegitimate child. Thus: —

"John Ring and Martha Lampson, both of Salsbury, bound over to this court for fornication, court ordered that they be severely whipped or pay a fine. If said John should, within six hours or before noon on this Sept. 29, 1680, marry said Martha, their fines were to be reduced. If he refused, he was to be bound for the maintenance of the child."

"Richard Prior, for fornication with Mary Williams, was committed to prison until he gave security in 30li. to save the town of Ipswich harmless from all charges about the child."

There is no logical stopping place for an account of the Puritans in the police court. The variety of the offenses, big and little, which brought them there ranges from what seem to us to-day the trivial or ridiculous to the most tragic. The reader of such an account should constantly bear in mind that it describes, not the ordinary life of the Puritan New Englander, but only his troubles and misdeeds. As a picture of the time it is no more, nor less, adequate than would be the police-court records for our own day.

XII

PURITANS AT PLAY

The span of human life among our New England forefathers was much shorter than it is to-day, but it must have seemed a great deal longer, thanks to their expertness in killing joy and their clumsiness in killing time. The pleasing diversions of affluent leisure were inconsistent with the task of settling a hostile wilderness, not less than with the austere character of the God of John Calvin. Play was perilous. It gave expression to natural human impulses, and these, being steeped in original sin, were in need of constant repression. Organizations to promote recreation were quite eclipsed by organizations to prevent it, or else to make it serve an obvious moral purpose.

Recreation of this latter sort was that afforded by military drill, the so-called training-day exercises, which enjoyed a wide popularity. This sport had the immense advantage of being serviceable to the community; hence it did not wound anybody's conscience by being a sinful waste of time. It was sometimes followed by competitions in shooting at a mark, for which it seemed proper to award prizes, since the outbreak of an Indian war might at any moment make it

highly desirable that the Puritan soldier should hit what he aimed at.

Attendance at funerals was another popular recreation, and a highly edifying one as a rule, though the excessive drinking of liquor on these presumably solemn occasions sometimes introduced an altogether unseemly hilarity. Funeral ceremonies were pompous and elaborate. Since death had usually occupied a large part of the deceased's attention since a few years after his birth, much was made of its final coming; so much, indeed, in the way of extravagant expenditure for funeral gifts that a law was passed to regulate this. In 1721, the General Court of Massachusetts, moved by the fact that "the charge or expence of funerals of late years (when the circumstances of the province so loudly calls for all sorts of frugality) is becoming very extravagant, especially in the giving of scarves, to the great detriment of the province and the impoverishment of many families," decreed that there should be no more gifts of scarves at funerals, under penalty of a fine of twenty pounds. Twenty years later another law, carrying a heavier penalty, seemed necessary. It provided that "no scarves, gloves (except six pair to the bearers and one pair to each minister of the church or congregation where any deceased person belongs), wine, rum, or rings, shall be allowed and given at any funeral, upon the penalty of fifty pounds." Such were the legal severities by

which the early New Englanders were barely restrained from impoverishing themselves, and apparently also from becoming intoxicated, while honoring the dead.

In those days, people became addicted to attending funerals, and a person of prominence in the community would be present at a great many of them. The inherent charm of the performance was noticeably heightened by the gifts bestowed, in the days before the prohibition laws. Judge Sewall's diary is full of more or less detailed accounts of the funerals he attended and the gifts he received at each. In one place he gives a long list, including the gifts, of those at which he had been a pallbearer during the past few years. Sometimes he yearned to attend a funeral, but hesitated to do so, the deceased being a notorious reprobate. Thus, his diary describes this narrow victory of propriety over cupidity: —

"This day John Ive, fishing in great Spie-pond, is arrested with mortal sickness which renders him in a manner speechless and senseless; dies next day; buried at Charlestown on the Wednesday. Was a very debauched, atheistical man. I was not at his Funeral. Had Gloves sent me, but the knowledge of his notoriously wicked life made me sick of going; and Mr. Mather, the president, came in just as I was ready to step out, and so I staid at home, and by that means lost a Ring: but hope had no loss. Follow thou

Me. was I suppose more complied with, than if had left Mr. Mather's company to go to such a Funeral."

These funeral gifts were a source of income to the poorly paid parsons, who sometimes sold them, together with similar presents received at weddings and baptisms. According to a record preserved by one of these worthy and impecunious divines, "in thirty-two years he appears to have received two thousand nine hundred and forty pairs of gloves at funerals, weddings, and baptisms. Of these he sold to the amount of fourteen hundred and forty-one pounds, eighteen shillings and one penny."

Comparable to the fascinating funerals in their power to draw the crowds were the Thursday lecture services, a kind of special midweek preaching service for those who did not get enough on Sunday. The towns held these midweek meetings on different days, and so many zealous persons spent large amounts of time traveling about from one lecture to another that the magistrates considered seriously the matter of restraining these repeaters, lest they neglect their regular work. All that was done, however, was to forbid the holding of lectures in the morning.

Some there were, however, who took no delight in such services, but rather found pleasure in deriding them. Sewall's diary laments thus one of the pranks of such mockers: —

(January 1717) "'T is sad it should be so, but a

virulent Libel was starch'd on upon the Three Doors of the Meeting House, containing the following Words;

'TO ALL TRUE-HEARTED CHRISTIANS.

'Good people, within this House, this very day,
'A Canting Crew will meet to fast and pray.
'Just as the miser fasts with greedy mind, to spare;
'So the glutton fasts, to eat a greater share.
'But the sower-headed Presbyterians fast to seem more holy,
'And their Canting Ministers to punish sinfull foley.' "

Other mischief-makers found their sport in making it impossible to hold services in the meetinghouse on the Lord's day. What they did is described as follows in a newspaper item, in June 1725: —

"Some evil-minded persons placed a Sturgeon of about eight feet in length on the Pulpit floor, where it lay undiscovered until the Lord's Day following; when it was so much Corrupted that it swarm'd with Vermine and caused such a Nausious and Infectious Stench that neither Minister nor People could by any Means assemble in the Meeting House, which occasion'd them to perform their Exercise in the Orchard."

There were several other interesting things that one might do concerning the services of the meetinghouse, though not without some risk of penalty. Thus the delicious drowsiness induced by the learned preacher's theological dialectic might be allowed to pass on into

slumber, but there were the tithingman and his rod to be considered. If one stayed awake, and disliked the sermon, one might say so quite frankly, but this led toward the critic's being placed in a conspicuous public location and labeled with a painfully noticeable title of "WANTON GOSPELLER," so that all beholders might "fear and be ashamed of breaking out into the like wickedness."

Many persons seem to have found that their chief delight in the meetinghouse was achieved through getting out of it at the earliest permissible moment. Their perverse attitude is rendered at least understandable by such descriptions of the duration of the service as the following, from Cotton Mather's diary: —

"My Prayer was about two Hours, and my Sermon more."

The matter became so serious that the police authorities who got the congregation to enter the meeting had to be called upon again to keep them there till the service was ended. "There is much profaneness amongst us," say the Massachusetts colony records of the year 1675, "in persons turning their backs upon the public worship before it is finished and the blessing pronounced." According to W. R. Bliss, in *Side Glimpses from the Colonial Meeting-House*, "the scene described by the formal words of these records was nothing less than a general flight of

people from the meeting-house to the open air, as soon as the sermon was ended. It seems to represent the culmination of an agony. . . . To put a stop to this profaneness, all selectmen were commanded by the General Court to appoint men to bolt or shut the doors of the meeting-house when the sermon was finished, or to act in 'any other meet way' to keep the audience inside 'until the exercise be ended. Sometimes," continues this authority, "constables were stationed outside the doors to arrest those who escaped too soon. As the profaneness increased, in spite of the Court, every generation of selectmen was compelled to consider some new 'meet way' to stop the stampedes. At last they made rules and regulations directing the manner in which congregations must go out. Here is a regulation put in force at Groton in the year 1756: —

" 'After the blessing is pronounced, pews and all the fore seats move out first; second seats to follow, and so on until the whole house be emptied.' "

Thus at last, we may hope, the worship of God was made to continue to the bitter end.

There were occasions, nevertheless, when the congregation came to the meetinghouse, and remained to the end, without any coercion by authority. Such were the times when notorious sinners were to make public confession of their gross misdoings, with such lurid and detailed frankness as no modern divorce court

would permit in a public session. Also, the preëxecution sermons to be preached at and about condemned murderers brought out large and eager audiences, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. A late and striking illustration of this flocking together for a moral warning and a morbid thrill is given by Trumbull, in his *History of Northampton.* The sermon was preached in Jonathan Edwards's church, but, *mirabile dictu,* the preacher was a Catholic priest, brought from Boston at the urgent request of the murderers. Interesting facts about this performance are the date, 1806, the size of the crowd that came, and the priest's scathing rebuke of them for coming. Trumbull describes the scene and sermon thus: —

"He immediately ascended the pulpit and casting his eyes upon the immense crowd that surrounded him, and beholding a great multitude of women who had come from every direction, he felt himself animated with holy indignation against the curiosity which had attracted to that mournful scene such a crowd of spectators. 'Orators,' cried he, in a loud and stern voice, 'are usually flattered by having a numerous audience, but I am ashamed of the one before me. . . . Are there then men to whom the death of their fellow beings is a spectacle of pleasure, an object of curiosity? . . . But you especially, O women! what has induced you to come to this place? Is it to wipe away the cold damps of death that trickle down

A Mournful POEM on the Death of *John Ormsby* and *Matthew Cushing*,
Who were appointed to be executed on *Boston* Neck, the 17th of *October*, 1734.

YOU Sinners all, both young and old
attend to what I write,
And lay to Heart while you have Time,
this ſad and doleful Sight.
Behold, I ſay, two Sinful Men,
who for their wicked Crimes,
Are haſt'ning to the Gallows Tree
to Die before their Times.
Who being wicked overmuch,
can't live out half their Days,
This is the Portion of all ſuch
as follow ſinful Ways.
Behold poor *Ormsby* now in Chains,
with ſad, and heavy Heart,
Approaching to the Place where he
will have his juſt Deſert.
No hope of Favour can he have,
from any human Hand,
The Blood which he has ſpilt muſt be
purged from off the Land.

He thought (no doubt) the darkſom Night
would have conceal'd his Crime,
But it was brought to open Light
within a little Time.
By which we all may plainly ſee
there is no Place upon
This ſpacious Earth where Sinners may
hide their Tranſgreſſion.
Oh! may the Fate of this young Man
ſcarce turn'd of Twenty Three,
A Warning prove to all our Youth,
of high and low Degree.
And let this Warning loud and ſhrill
be heard by ev'ry one,
O do no more ſuch Wickedneſs
as hat of late been done.
Lament and wail his woful Caſe,
and by him Warning take;
A Sight I think enough to make
a Heart of Stone to ake.

Courtesy of the Boston Public Library

A "MOURNFUL POEM" ON THE EXECUTION OF ORMSBY AND CUSHING, 1734

the face of these unfortunate men? Is it to experience the painful emotions which this scene ought to inspire in every feeling heart? No, it is not for this. Is it then to behold their anguish, and to look upon it with tearless, eager and longing eyes? Oh! I blush for you, your eyes are full of murder . . . you boast of possessing sensibility, and you say it is the highest virtue in women, but if the sufferings of others afford you pleasure, and the death of man is an inviting entertainment for your curiosity, I can no longer believe in your virtue. You forget your sex. You are a dishonor and a reproach to it.'

"The execution took place immediately after this discourse," continues the historian, "but not a woman dared appear at it. All retired from the church ashamed of themselves, and blushing for the inhuman curiosity that had brought them there." If this be strictly true, it would seem that the men, at least, were not prevented by the rebuke from remaining to witness the hanging, for the account goes on to say concerning it that "the largest crowd probably ever gathered here up to that time, assembled, it being estimated that 15,000 people were present."

A far more wholesome but, unhappily, less usual form of diversion indulged in by the early New Englanders was, according to Weeden's *Economic and Social History of New England*, the occasional "battles of wit and humor, engaging whole communities as

interested spectators." In these battles the contestants did not try to surpass each other in eloquence and logic, but only in jocosity, and the one who rendered his audience most nearly helpless with laughter, and his antagonist most absurd with ridicule, won the bout. The contemporary view seems to have been that one Will Rogers, all by himself, making fun for the audience, was less amusing than two such humorists making fun of each other. Thus, "in 1756, two contestants, Jonathan Gowen, of Lynn, and Joseph Emerson, of Reading, met by appointment at a tavern in Saugus. The audience thronged, and they were obliged to adjourn to an open field. After a doughty fight, Emerson went home in the despairing depths of chagrin which only beaten wits know. The recorder says that Gowen's wit was 'beyond all human imagination.'"

The same authority writes of the rise of Boston tea parties in the middle of the eighteenth century, before this gentle indoor sport became famous in that town through stage Indians and salt water. "Tea parties were gradually establishing themselves," he says. "At first the gossiping dames each carried her cup, saucer, and spoon, but soon the husbands began to bewail the investment of the 'enormous sums of 30 or 40 shillings in tea equipages.'"

Tea parties were the diluted, refined, and feminized version of the tavern parties, a favorite, though

somewhat disreputable, diversion of New Englanders from the earliest days. The taverning habit became so widespread and so notorious as to call forth the public condemnation of professional godliness. The ministers of Boston, in 1694, fulminated against "Ye Liberty taken by Towne Dwellers to mispend their Time in Tavernes which are places properly and honestly designated but for ye Accomodation of Travellers — It is most earnestly prayed That some effectuall check may be given unto this way of sinning." "And yet," says Bliss, "the village parson was often to be seen there of an evening." Moreover, the law forbade the landlord to allow anyone "to remain in his house tippling or drinking after nine o'clock in the night."

This nine-o'clock hour, nevertheless, did not seem altogether satisfactory to some in the eighteenth century, including the fearsome younger generation. Captain Francis Goelet's Journal records the following, for instance, in 1750: —

"At Mr. Sheppard's, a company of about forty gentlemen; after having dined in a very elegant manner upon turtle, etc., drank about the toasts and sang a number of songs, and were exceedingly merry until three o'clock in the morning, from whence went upon the Rake; going past the commons in our way home, surprised a company of country young men and women with a violin at a tavern, dancing and making merry. Upon our entering the house the young

women fled; we took possession of the room, having the fidler and the young man with us with the keg of sugared dram."

Our forefathers of the Puritan period did not have to depend entirely upon good liquor, however, for their emotional release. Their savage neighbors, the Indians, were sometimes helpful to them in this respect. Over against the horrifying cruelties and the property losses which accompanied Indian warfare we should not fail to consider the outlet thus furnished for the accumulations of hatefulness normally present in the Puritanic mind, through the systematic and unnatural thwarting of its impulses and the prohibition of its desires, from earliest youth until life's end. Without the chance to release this reservoir of rage from time to time upon the luckless Indians, the stern Calvinists would have become impossibly cantankerous among themselves.

Again, the white colonist who disliked the Puritan manner of life bitterly enough might go into the wilderness and live among the Indians. An astonishing number of those who had tried both sets of neighbors preferred the savages. The case of Eunice Williams, kidnapped at the Deerfield massacre, is often cited. The learned editors of Samuel Sewall's diary comment thus on this case and similar ones: —

"She [Eunice Williams] made a visit, with her husband, to Deerfield, where her father had resumed

his ministry, but no entreaties would prevail with her to resume a civilized life. She was one among very many of those born in New England, in Puritan families, as well as of a much larger number of the French, who were so fascinated by the charms of a wild life with the natives in the woods as to renounce their own race and homes. A more famous example of this 'reversion' was that of Mary Jemeson, the so-called 'White Woman.'

"Competent authorities tell us that, in all the relations, peaceful or hostile, between Indians and Europeans on this continent, more than one hundred of the whites have been 'Indianized' to each single Indian who has been civilized."

Lastly, individual Indians who happened to be executed for violating some Puritan statute sometimes contributed to the gayety of the commonwealth and the interests of science by having their bodies dissected, regardless of any embarrassment that this might cause them at the final resurrection of the dead. Samuel Sewall describes such a dissection, relating a joke in connection with it, and also mentioning the expenditure of several shillings for liquor. As he was then a youth of only twenty-four years, possibly this may be regarded as an incident of sowing wild oats, in the Puritan manner.

"Sept. 22, 1676. Spent the day from 9 in the M. with Mr. (Dr.) Brakenbury, Mr. Thomson, Butler,

Hooper, Cragg, Pemberton, dissecting the middlemost of the Indian executed the day before," says the Sewall diary. The joke was on Hooper, "who, taking the heart in his hand, affirmed it to be the stomack. I spent 18s., 6d., in Ale, 6d in Madera Wine, and 6d I gave to the maid."

A still more flagrant case of wild-oating was brought out in the church trial of an army chaplain in 1707. "John Barnard," says the record, "having given Scandal, by the Liberty he took, of using the scandalous Game of cards when he was lately a Chaplain abroad in the Army, he this Day made his public Acknowledgement, which gave Satisfaction to the People of God."

Among the few holidays allowed by the Puritans, the Fourth of July had a more or less adequate predecessor in the Fifth of November, Gunpowder-Treason-Day, or Guy Fawkes's Day. Evidently fireworks were used in its celebration and had become a menacing fire risk as early as the year 1700, for Sewall's diary in that year tells us that "a Proclamation was ordered to prevent endangering the Town by Fire-Works."

A form of sport which it was difficult for the adult male Puritan to escape was service in the Police and Watch, and, in his turn, going the rounds to inspect public order. Judge Sewall continued to perform that more or less exciting service when he was well past

sixty years of age, as the following item from his diary in 1715 attests: —

"Set out at 11. at night on Horseback with Tho. Wallis to inspect the order of the Town. Constable Eady, Mr. Allen, Salter, Herishor, Simson, Howel, Mr. John Marion" were also in the scouting party. "Dissipated the players at Nine Pins at Mount-Whoredom," continues the diary, whose editor explains in a footnote that "we may presume this spot to have been on the slope of Beacon Hill." We may presume, also, that Judge Sewall had no incurable aversion to "Nine Pins," as such, since he himself played it while on a visit to England; but he could hardly show it mercy at midnight in a disreputable section of more or less godly Boston.

Even more exciting than serving on the Watch was the sport of fighting with it, though this was sometimes costly. Joshua Hempstead, Junior, grandson of the worthy New London diarist, seems to have enjoyed this sport, with others of the younger generation, and to have caused his relatives considerable anxiety and expense in the matter. Items in the Hempstead diary during June, 1744, tell the story: —

"June 7: I was . . . at Court at Capt Coits about resisting Norwich Constable Peck wherein Joshua was too much Concerned."

"June 15: the Granjury Impaneled & Presented

anew Thos Stubbins Nicho Spruk & Joshua Hempstead Junr for Endeavoring to Rescue Jno Calder out of the hands of Peck the Constable of Norwich."

"June 22: I pd Stidman 40s for pleading for Joshua in the Riot action."

"June 23: Joshua & Thomas Stubbins was fined 8 pounds each & the Cost of Presentation as much more & the other Delinquents (vizt) Collins & John Richards Junr 4 pounds each & Joshua Wheeler & Jonathan Rogers 3 pounds each & Cost &c."

The spirit of play showed itself among our Puritan forefathers in many other ways besides those here mentioned. To catalogue them all is not the purpose of this chapter, but rather to note their place in the life of early New England. It would not be far wrong to say that, in the seventeenth century at least, play was commonly regarded as a form of wickedness, unless it were adorned with some supposed moral or religious value. The type of play which lent itself to such adornment was likely to be either deadly dull or feverishly morbid. The road toward happiness through the free expression of healthy human desires was permanently closed. Hence an unnecessarily large number of worthy persons were forced to make the hard choice between Happiness and Heaven. A regrettably small number of these chose Happiness.

XIII

"JOY TO THE WORLD; LET ALL BE GLUM"

SHORTLY before Christmas Day, in the year 1722, a bitter controversy was being waged in the Massachusetts Legislature, or, as it was then called, the General Court. Stenographic records of all that was said are lacking, and probably it is better so, because the disputants were full of wrath and doubtless they used some phrases that would jar upon the polite ears of their reverent descendants. One of the angriest of these debaters, however, Judge Samuel Sewall, jotted down in his famous diary a brief account of the wordy war; and from this diary it appears that the subject they were discussing with such unseemly heat was "Peace on earth, good will to men," or, at least, the observance of that blessed birthday which symbolizes such peace and good will.

"Let us adjourn the Court over Christmas day," the governor had suggested; but, from the uproar which followed, one might suppose he had said, "Let us set apart this day for the worship of the Devil." Indeed, many a sturdy Puritan seems to have believed that Christmas was the Devil's own holiday, and that any celebration of it was likely to cause laughter in

Hell and weeping in Heaven. In the "good old days" of the seventeenth century, this festivity had been sternly prohibited, but the reckless modern generation of 1722 showed signs of disregarding the prohibition. The old law of 1659 read as follows: —

"For preventing disorders arising in several places within this jurisdiction, by reason of some still observing such festivals as were superstitiously kept in other countries to the great dishonor of God and offence of others; It is therefore ordained by this Court and the authority thereof, that whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas and the like, either by forbearing labor, feasting, or any other way upon any such account as aforesaid, every such person so offending shall pay for each such offence, five shillings as a fine to the Country."

This law, appearing on the statute book amid those against dancing, card-playing, and dice-throwing, not only forbade the would-be reveler to engage in these sinful pastimes on December 25, but also required that he should not work less or eat more on that day than he did on any ordinary day. Hence, the bold, godless, and joyful person who determined to celebrate Christmas in defiance of the law would have to include in his items of expense, along with the cost of turkey, cranberries, pumpkin pie, and Jamaica rum, "five shillings as a fine to the Country." Moreover, he could not expect to get away with such riotous irrev-

erence oftener than about once in ten years, for there were those who kept watch, and they would no doubt stiffen the penalty against an incorrigible and defiant sinner.

Judge Sewall was one of those who kept watch, ever fearful lest Christmas cheer and carols would seduce the careless into frivolity, or, worse still, into the Church of England, which had long enjoyed and encouraged the observance of that festival. In his diary are numerous items like the following: —

"Decr 25, 1685. Friday. Carts come to town and shops open as is usual. Some somehow observe the day; but are vexed I believe that the body of the people profane it, and blessed be God no authority yet to compel them to keep it."

Evidently things were in a bad way, even as early as the date here mentioned, 1685. Not only was the stern old law of 1659 no longer in force (it had been repealed in 1681), but there seemed to be real danger that a new law might be passed, which, instead of forbidding, would actually command, the observance of this Anglican and devilish feast day. Small wonder, then, that when the governor of Massachusetts, in 1722, ventured to propose such a public recognition of the dreaded Christmas day as the adjournment of the General Court would be, his Puritan advisers viewed the proposal with wrath and alarm.

"Decr. 19. His Excellency took me aside to the

South-east window of the Council Chamber," says Judge Sewall's diary, "to speak to me about adjourning the Genl Court to Monday next because of Christmas. I told his Excellency I would consider it."

The probability that the Judge would consider it favorably, however, was of the scantiest.

Next day he consulted with that most eminent of New England divines, the Reverend Doctor Cotton Mather. "Decr. 20. I invited Dr. Mather to Dine with me. After Dinner I consulted with him about the adjournment of the Court. We agreed," continues the diary, "that 't would be expedient to take a vote of the Council and Representatives for it." A shrewd political move, this, for a majority of the members of these bodies were very likely to be against such an un-Puritanical innovation, and their vote might influence, though it could not compel, the governor's decision.

On the following day they fought the matter out in the council meeting. Once more the governor took Judge Sewall aside and urged him to support the proposed adjournment over Christmas. This time the Judge returned an emphatic "No!" and soon after that everybody began to speak with a good deal more frankness than charm. "Col. Taylor spoke so loud and boisterously for Adjourning, that 't was hard for any to put in a word," complains the diary; but many and warm words were "put in," nevertheless.

The arguments of the governor and his party were that "All kept Christmas but we," and that it was high time for Massachusetts to come out of her provincial isolation and join the rest of the civilized world in this matter; and that, moreover, there was no longer any sense in shying away from this holy day just because the Church of England happened to observe it.

The Puritan party replied that their forefathers had traveled many weary miles and endured numerous hardships in order to escape from the harsh despotism of that stepmother church; hence it seemed only fair and natural that the majority in the General Court be allowed to decide whether they should begin recognizing officially here in New England the old pagan festival which the Anglican Church had mistakenly seen fit to celebrate under the name of Christmas.

The governor, after all the tumult and the shouting had died away, stood firm and proclaimed the adjournment, thus giving a sort of negative recognition to the holiday; but this by no means settled the long strife over admitting Christmas into good and regular standing in New England, and it was only after several other bitter episodes of conflict that the more perverse and progressive of New Englanders succeeded in making it thoroughly respectable for little children to hang up their stockings on Christmas

Eve and hope that the old heathen Santa Claus would fill them.

Of course, there had been all along certain diversions which it was perfectly proper, even from the Puritan point of view, to indulge in on Christmas Day. For instance, Judge Sewall spent part of the Christmas of 1696 disporting himself with a certain solemn gayety in the ancestral tomb of the Sewall family. In his diary he describes as follows this picnic with the dead: —

"I went at noon to see in what order things were set; and there I was entertained with a view of, and converse with, the Coffins of my dear Father Hull, Mother Hull, Cousin Quinsey, and my Six Children." After some further details of this post-mortem chat, he remarks, "'T was an awfull yet pleasing Treat; Having said, The Lord knows who shall be brought hether next, I came away."

The younger generation seem not to have been attracted by such cemeterial celebrations of Christmas, and we find the Reverend Cotton Mather lamenting the diversions they preferred. "I have heard of a Number of young People of both Sexes," he writes, "belonging, many of them, to my Flock, who have had on the Christmas-night, this last Week, a Frolick, a revelling Feast, and Ball, which discovers their Corruption, and has a Tendency to corrupt them yet more, and provoke the Holy One to give them up

unto eternal Hardness of Heart. I must acquit myself as prudently and as faithfully as ever I can, in the Discharge of my Duty to them on this Occasion, and endeavour to bring them unto Repentance, and prevent such Follies for the Time to come."

Mather's objection to these revels was, apparently, not so much that they were held on Christmas as that they were held at all. They were too playful. Moreover, they were wasteful of those precious and irrecoverable moments all of which were so tremendously needed in preparing souls for eternity. His utter distrust of the spirit of play, even in the case of young boys and girls, has been shown elsewhere in this volume in relation to his treatment of his little son, Sammy. The enormous value which he placed on time was, to be sure, what made possible the prodigious productiveness of his excessively busy life, but he sometimes carried this heavenly-minded parsimony to extremes that seem ridiculous, and even absurd. The genuine pathos of his frantic eagerness to redeem every fleeting second sometimes slides down into equally genuine bathos, in his uncouth devices for making every fugitive interval render its contribution to holiness. Thus, we may admire the man who is too busy to engage in personal quarrels, however much provoked thereto: "Because no man can manage a personal Quarrel against another without losing abundance of precious Time. . . . And one Likely

to Live so little a Time as I, had need throw away as Little of his Time as ever he can." But what shall we think of a man, already an outstanding figure in the religious, political, and literary life of his day, who devises, and no doubt puts into practice, such time-saving and flesh-mortifying schemes as the following, described thus lengthily in his diary?

"From my Youth," says Cotton Mather's diary, "it has been my Frequent, my Daily Practice, to make occasional Reflections, or, from Occasions which I have seen in Occurrences before me, to raise Thoughts of Piety, and these mostly by finding Similitudes to assist and excite such Thoughts in those Occurrences.

"These occasional Reflections do not only serve me very commonly to carry on useful Conferences, made savoury with some little sort of Witt, when I am in Company; but they are also a delightful Entertainment unto me when I am alone.

"But at length I saw I had one Opportunity every Day for such occasional Reflections as it might not be amiss for me to oblige myself rarely to lett pass me without them.

"I was once emptying the Cistern of Nature and making Water at the Wall. At the same Time, there came a Dog who did so too, before me. Thought I; 'What mean and vile Things are the Children of Men in this mortal State! How much do our natural

Necessities abase us, and place us in some regard on the same Level with the very Dogs!'

"My Thought proceeded. 'Yett I will be a more noble Creature; and at the very Time when my natural Necessities debase me into the Condition of the Beast, my Spirit shall (I say, at that very Time!) rise and soar, and fly up towards the employment of the Angel.

"Accordingly, I resolved that it should be my ordinary Practice, whenever I step to answer the one or other Necessity of Nature, to make it an Opportunity of shaping in my Mind some holy, noble, divine Thought; usually by way of occasional Reflection on some sensible Object which I either then have before me, or have lately had so: a Thought that may leave upon my Spirit some further Tincture of Piety!

"And I have done according to this Resolution!

"Be sure the loathsome and filthy Nature of Sin, and the Method of Deliverance from it, must make an Article in some Thousands of Thoughts on These Occasions."

According to Mather, a Christian ought always to "be full of self-abasing and self-abhoring Reflections. By loathing of himself continually," he writes, "and Being very sensible of what are his own loathsome Circumstances, a Christian does what is very pleasing to Heaven." To induce this heavenly state of mind in children, it was usually necessary to divert

them sharply from their natural tendencies; hence to subject them to frequent chastisements, both of the body and of the spirit. The youth of that period had the advantage, therefore, of being a well-spanked generation.

Our revered ancestors began very promptly the culture of the infant's immortal soul. They brought into the world veritable herds of children, many of whom died young. As soon as possible, therefore, the process of spanking the child into salvation was begun. During those early years, before the spoken word or printed page could accomplish much, the wide-open hand was ever on the job, imparting instruction both body and soul could understand. It stayed on the job, too, until the child was well along toward maturity.

Full-grown persons also were whaled, publicly and privately, including unruly slaves, free persons who had committed some misdemeanor, and wives who had failed to keep their husbands good-natured. If the private whaling produced too much noise or too many scars, it sometimes brought the too energetic disciplinarian into court. Haverhill, Massachusetts, furnishes two sorts of illustrations. One was a man who beat his daughter with a flail; this was considered irregular. The other was a wife-beater, who indignantly protested, however, against being thus brought before a magistrate, because, said he, "My wife is my servant and slave. I can do as I like with her."

From Sawyer's "History of the Pilgrims and Puritans"

QUAKERS AND OTHERS WHO OFFENDED THE NEW ENGLAND CONSCIENCE WERE OCCASIONALLY SCOURGED AT THE WHIPPING POST OR THE CART'S TAIL

It was not perfectly safe, nevertheless, to beat even a slave as hard as one might wish to. On this point a prominent citizen of New London, Connecticut, wrote in his diary, nearly two hundred years ago, that he "went to the Courthouse to hear the Examination of Sundry Witnesses Concerning ye Cruel Whiping of Zeno a Slave to Mr. Nicholas Letchmer"; and he tells us that there was "a very great Concourse of People. The Court Chamber wod not hold all." Evidently the town was considerably stirred over this master's unnecessary thoroughness in discipline.

The spankings of children were by no means always applied by the hand, and to the usual place. Sometimes they were applied directly to the soul. Of this there are a multitude of illustrations like the following, taken from Judge Sewall's diary: —

"A flourishing youth of 9 years old, dies of the Small Pocks. I tell Sam. [his ten-year-old son] of it and what need he had to prepare for Death, and therefore to endeavor really to pray when he said over the Lord's Prayer. He seemed not much to mind," continues the diary, "but when he came to say, Our Father, he burst out into a bitter Cry; and when I askt him what was the matter and he could speak, he burst out into a bitter Cry and said he was afraid he should die. I pray'd with him, and read Scriptures."

A favorite method for inducing heavenly-minded-

ness in children was the requiring of their presence at the numerous and edifying funerals which graced the social whirl of Boston's aristocracy. Sometimes they even served as pall bearers. The sight of a juvenile group thus employed once inspired the genial Judge Sewall to write in his diary the following lyric fragment: —

> Three Sams, two Johns, and one good Tom,
> Bore prudent Mary to her Tomb.

No doubt it was exceptional, even for the Puritan ascetic, to make deliberate choice of a wife who was ugly, both in appearance and in temper, in order that she might serve him as a "trial" and an aid to the mortification of the flesh. Sewall does mention, however, a minister's "prayer to God, to bring his affection to close with a person pious but hard favored"; and the following story about a man from Newington, Connecticut, however large an element of fiction it may contain, suggests that this sort of thing was not unheard of.

"Mr. A. of this place," so runs the story, "who was a very religious and conscientious man, married for a wife one of the most ill-natured and troublesome women which could be found in the vicinity. This occasioned universal surprise wherever he was known, and one of his neighbors ventured to ask him the reasons which governed his choice. Mr. A. replied that, having had but little or no trouble in the world,

he was fearful of becoming too much attached to things of time and sense. And he thought by experiencing some afflictions he would become more weaned from the world, and that he married such a woman as he thought would accomplish the object. The best part of the story is that the wife, hearing of the reasons why he married her, was much offended, and, out of revenge, became one of the most pleasant and dutiful wives in the town, declaring that she was not going to be made a pack horse, to carry her husband to Heaven."

Cotton Mather himself writes in his diary, without the faintest indication that he is intentionally humorous: "I entreat of my discreet Consort that she would plainly discover it unto me, if she see in me any Thing that needs to be mended, or that she would have to be otherwise. As yett," he concludes gravely, "she tells me of nothing."

There are places in Mather's diary, however, in which he seems to be attempting the most astonishing feats of humor. Indeed, there is some evidence that seems to brand him as a teller of monstrously improbable yarns. In particular, his stories of the cold weather he experienced would arouse the envy of the most daring Ananian humorist; yet he relates them with austere gravity and a plenitude of pious phrases. Witness the following, written by this eminent minister of the gospel: —

"I attempted this day the exercise of a secret fast before the Lord. But so extremely cold was the weather, that in a warm room, on a great fire, the juices forced out at the end of short billets of wood, by the heat of the flame on which they were laid, yet froze into ice at their coming out."

Now what must we think of a man who will put that sort of thing in his diary, to be read by his soberly trustful posterity and other admirers? Why, this is putting a fringe of frost on the flames themselves. Dare we conclude that the real Mather, so rarely uninhibited, was a jolly chap, after all, and that this was a sample of his recklessly mendacious humor? A kind of religious joke it must have been, for he continues with the utmost gravity: —

"This extremity of cold caused me to desist from the purpose I was upon; because I saw it impossible to serve the Lord, without much distraction."

Possibly the Puritan conscience made room for a chuckle now and then, amid the prayers and sighs.

XIV

SURPRISES FROM OLD SALEM

It was the misfortune of old Salem to achieve a darksome notoriety in connection with witchcraft executions, though it may well be that she was no more depraved in this regard than were many other New England communities. At her worst, in the witch frenzy, she was probably little more than a sore boil, evidencing, and in large measure relieving, the widespread sickness of the body politic. Indeed, there is some evidence which seems to indicate that if Salem is to be used as a horrible example it would better be not for her cruel enforcement of the laws against witchcraft, but rather for her conspicuous violation of the laws against smuggling. Because she was so largely engaged in shipping, her temptation to this form of lawlessness was very great, and her yielding to the temptation very thorough. By the middle of the eighteenth century the merchants of Salem seem to have achieved complete corruption and control of the Boston port officials; so complete that when an official saw fit, for personal reasons, to begin enforcing the law against some ship captain who was his private enemy, he gave the merchants timely warning of this

impending innovation. The following letter from Gilbert Deblois to Samuel Curwin, the former an officer of the port of Boston, the latter a Salem merchant, strikingly illustrates the smooth-working system of lawbreaking: —

Bos. *Augt.* 6, 1759

Saml Curwin Esqr.

Sr. I shall Esteem it afav. you 'l take an Oppy. to Inform all your Merchts. & others, Concern'd in Shiping up Wine, Oyl, Olives, Figs, Raisins &c. that I am Determind Publickly to Inform the Collector of this Port, of any those Articles I can find out, are on board any Vessell commanded by or under the Care of Capt. Ober, in order they may be Seiz'd, I shall not Concern my self abt. any other Coaster, let 'em bring up what they will, but this Capt. Ober has Cheated me in such a manner (tho to no great Value) that I 'm determind to keep a good look out on him, therefore would have all those Concern'd in that Trade, Regulate themselves accordingly, & if they will Risque any such Prohibetted Goods in sd. Ober's Vessell, they must not (after such notice of my Design) think hard of me, as what I may do will be to punish sd. Ober & not them — I have just told sd. Ober that I wd. send this notification to Salem & wd. Certainly get his Vessell & Cargo Seizd Sooner or Later.

I am Sr.

Your hble Servt.

Gilbt. Deblois.

P. S. I 'm a lover of Honest Men, therefore, dont be Surpriz'd at the above, as I look upon Ober to be a great Cheat.

Pray Distroy this when done with.

The tendency to look after the important interests of life, without too nice a regard for the law, is illustrated also by the old-fashioned fist fight, indulged in more than a century earlier than the incident described above, by a man no less prominent in Salem than its sometime governor, John Endicott. At the time of this fight, the two-fisted Endicott had become an ex-governor, but he still held the dignified position of member of the Court of Assistants, under Governor Winthrop. The man whom he punched haled him into court on a charge of assault, and a fine of ten shillings was imposed. We may infer, however, from a letter written by Endicott to Winthrop, that this disturber of the peace felt that he had got more than ten shillings' worth of satisfaction out of his fistic exercise and temper discharge. "I acknowledge I was too rash in striking him," he writes, "but if you had seen the manner of his carriage, with such daring of me, with his arms akimbo &c, it would have provoked a very patient man." The injured party not only had the law on Endicott, but threatened to take satisfaction by renewing the fist battle. The ex-governor would have been charmed to oblige. "If it were lawful to try it at blows," he writes belligerently, "and he a fit man for me to deal with, you should not hear me complain; but I hope the Lord hath brought me off from that course." Here his Puritan conscience seems to rouse up, a bit late, and hold his natural

aggressiveness in check. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was not precisely his resource in temptation. He preferred the old Salem version: "Always go straight forward, and if you meet the Devil, cut him in two and go between the pieces."

Closely akin to the Endicott family by intermarriage were the Crowninshields; and to this latter family every small boy and girl in the United States is deeply indebted. It was not P. T. Barnum, the famed circus man, who brought the first elephant to America. No indeed; it was Jacob Crowninshield, of Salem, to whom is due the honor and glory for that happy precedent. The ship in which the strange monster sailed from its home in India was the America, and the captain was Nathaniel Hathorne, father of the great novelist who wrote *The Scarlet Letter* and changed his name to Hawthorne.

August 30, 1797, was circus day in sober Salem, the very first circus in its memorable history. Of course the elephant was the whole show, but he was plenty. Everybody was there, with or without the excuse of children. Even the grave and awful minister came, the Reverend William Bentley, D. D., and he wrote about the occasion in his diary. In fact, the only entry in the diary for that day was the following enthusiastic and detailed account of the big event: —

"Went to the Market House to see the Elephant. The crowd of spectators forbad me any but a general

& superficial view of him. He was six feet four inches high. Of large Volume, his skin black, as tho' lately oiled. A short hair was on every part, but not sufficient for a covering. His tail hung one third of his height, but without any long hairs at the end of it. His legs were still at command at the joints, but he could not be persuaded to lie down. The Keeper repeatedly mounted him but he persisted in shaking him off. Bread and Hay were given him and he took bread out of the pockets of the Spectators. He also drank porter & drew the cork, conveying the liquor from his trunk into his throat. His Tusks were just to be seen beyond the flesh, & it was said had been broken. We say *his* because the common language. It is a female & teats appeared just behind the fore-legs."

It is said that some have been so base as to deny that it was the good ship America which brought this precious pet to our shores, but the present writer wishes to testify that he has seen with his own eyes the evidence which seems to prove this important fact. In the Essex Institute, in Salem, is the log book of the voyage in question, and therein is recorded, in unusually large letters, as though the writer were excited about it, "ELEPHANT ON BOARD."

These Crowninshields seem to have been true sportsmen. Even after they had conveyed to our beloved land the germ of the great American circus, they did not feel, apparently, that they had done

enough toward making life gay and attractive. Therefore one of them, Captain George Crowninshield, proceeded to build, and sail about the world in, the most remarkably gorgeous and astonishing pleasure craft that ever made the large and little fishes bulge their eyes and waggle their tails in envious excitement.

"When she was launched in Salem harbor in 1817," writes Ralph D. Paine, "at least a thousand curious people visited her every day she lay in port. Her fittings were gorgeous for her time, what with Oriental draperies, plate-glass mirrors, sideboards, and plate. With that bold individuality of taste responsible for the yellow curricle in which Captain George was wont to dazzle Salem, when he drove through the streets, he painted his yacht in different colors and patterns along her two sides. To starboard she showed a hull of horizontal stripes laid on in most of the colors of the rainbow. To port she was a curious 'herringbone' pattern of brilliant hues. The owner sailed for the Mediterranean on what was destined to be a triumphant voyage. He had prepared himself with no fewer than three hundred letters of introduction to eminent civil, military, and naval persons of Italy, Spain, and other countries. The cook of the Cleopatra's Barge (the vessel's suggestive name, which she easily surpassed) was a master of his craft, the stock of wine was choice and abundant, and if

ever an open-handed yachtsman sailed the deep it was this Salem pioneer of them all.

"The vessel was the sensation of the hour in every port. Her journal recorded that an average of more than three thousand visitors came aboard on every pleasant day while she was in foreign ports, and that in Barcelona eight thousand people came off to inspect her in one day. Wherever possible the owner chartered a band of music or devised other entertainment for his guests."

Wherever this festive barque appeared, a good time was had by all, not least by the captain; and this is, perhaps, one of the most unusual things about the whole performance. The captain's life on the ordinary voyage must have been rather more lonely than jolly, with his wife and children, or his sweetheart, left behind for months, or even years. Of course these silent and stout-hearted young sea dogs rarely said or wrote anything of how they felt about these absences, and for that very reason a queer bit of evidence found in the rubbish of a Salem attic may represent the thoughts of many a captain besides the one who wrote it. This revealing find, mentioned by the authority quoted above, is a series of entries written in cipher in the log of the ship Rubicon, which sailed from Boston, May 11, 1816. After he had been a week at sea, this captain, whose name is not given in the records discovered, began to write at the bottom of the pages

of his log book certain intimately personal thoughts which he tried to conceal in a crude cipher, probably of his own invention. The first of these entries reads as follows:—

"L nb wvzi druv what hszoo R dirgv go uroo gsrh hsvvg R droo gvoo blf gszg R ollp blfi ovgvih levi zmw levi zmw drhs nv rm blf zinh yfg R dzng rm kzgrvmxv gsrmprmt lm Z szkb nvvgrmt — R zn dvoo."

This looks somewhat as though it were an attempt to reproduce a bit of the native language of Zanzibar or the South Sea Islands, but it really is plain English, slightly befuddled. The man who found this old log book easily unraveled the simple cipher code, which consists merely in reversing the alphabet; that is, in writing Z when you mean A, writing Y when you mean B, and so on. How this works is made clearer if the two alphabets are spread before the reader, thus: —

A — Z	J — Q	S — H
B — Y	K — P	T — G
C — X	L — O	U — F
D — W	M — N	V — E
E — V	N — M	W — D
F — U	O — L	X — C
G — T	P — K	Y — B
H — S	Q — J	Z — A
I — R	R — I	

Now translate, or rather decode, the message quoted above. The first letter of it is L; therefore look in the straight-ahead alphabet for L and use the letter opposite it — that is, O. The second word of the message is "nb." The letter opposite N in the parallel alphabets is M, and the letter opposite B is Y; therefore this word is "my." Thus the first four words are found to be "O my dear wife." The next word, however, he did not stop to put in cipher, so it stands as written: "what." Looking out for little irregularities like this, the reader will presently discover that the whole message runs about as follows: —

"O my dear wife, what shall I write to fill this sheet. I will tell you that I look your letters over and over and wish me in your arms, but I wait in patience, thinking on a happy meeting. I am well."

Apparently he wrote this to relieve his heartache, finding comfort in putting down his tender thoughts in this secret fashion. The log of the Rubicon contains numerous other unsent love notes; the following, for instance, in the same cipher: —

Joanna, this day brings to my mind grateful reflections. This is the day that numbers thirty years of my Dear's life. O, that I could lay in her arms to-night and recount the days that have passed away in youthful love and pleasure."

Yet this lovelorn skipper doubtless met the rough

emergencies of his seafaring life as courageously as any, and was never for a moment suspected by his sailors of any softness of heart.

That the emergencies of a captain's job were sometimes alarming enough is illustrated in the experiences of Captain Nathaniel Silsbee, of the famous Silsbee family of Salem. In 1792 he was in command of a ship, though he was not yet twenty years of age. One day he was suddenly called upon to save a man's life, under strangely difficult circumstances. Just what happened is described thus, in his own words: —

"In an intensely cold and severe storm on the first night after leaving home, our cook, a colored man somewhat advanced in age, having preferred his cooking house on deck to his berth below for a sleeping place, had his feet so badly frozen as to cause gangrene to such an extent as to render amputation of all his toes on both feet absolutely necessary for the preservation of his life. Having neither surgical skill nor surgical instruments on board the ship, the operation which had become necessary was a very unpleasant and a very hazardous one; so much so that no one on board was willing to take the direction of it, and I was most reluctantly compelled to assume, with the aid of the second mate, the responsibility for performing the surgical operation, with no other instruments than a razor and a pair of scissors, and which, in consequence of the feeble state of the cook's health, required two days to accomplish."

Probably this captain had not agreed, when taking his job, to perform two-day surgical operations with a razor and a pair of scissors, but he had assumed responsibility for the lives of his crew, and he squarely met that responsibility. Moreover, his slashing and snipping was crowned with success, for the account concludes, "and in the course of a few weeks thereafter the cook was able to resume his duties, recovered his usual health and made several subsequent voyages."

When responsibility fell on the crew and some of them tried to dodge it, Captain Silsbee was resourceful enough to make them behave. One day his ship was about to be attacked by a privateer, and he was making preparations for repelling the attack; "but on calling the crew to the quarters which had been previously assigned to them," he writes, "I was informed by one of my officers that there were four or five of the seamen who were unwilling thus to expose themselves, alleging that they had neither engaged nor expected to fight. On hearing this, all hands being on deck, I ordered every passage way which led below deck, excepting that leading to the cabin, to be securely fastened; then calling to me such of the crew as had not engaged to fight, I immediately sent them up the shrouds to repair the ratlin, and to perform other duties which they had engaged to do, in the most exposed part of the ship. Finding themselves thus exposed to greater danger than their shipmates, they

requested, before the schooner had come within gunshot of us, to be recalled from their situation and allowed to participate in the defence of the ship, which request was granted."

No wonder this persuasive and resourceful captain later became a United States Senator!

Resourcefulness of many kinds was a prime requisite for the sea captain of those days. On sailing, he received, of course, his orders as to where to go with his cargo and what to ship for the return voyage, but these orders were necessarily based largely on guesswork as to market conditions, lacking telegraphic or other recent information; hence the skipper must use his own judgment often, being guided by whatever new information he might be able to pick up after sailing.

The following letter, copied from the Derby Manuscripts, in the Essex Institute of Salem, suggests vividly the anxieties of the young commander in such circumstances. It suggests also that learning to spell was not a part of a seafaring man's education.

To Captain Richard Derby
Merchant in Salem,
N. England

In Sight of the Rokefer
28 *March* — 1763.

Hond Sr. I am about to wright a Letter that is not agreable to me. Nither will it be to you I beleave. I met with the mis-

fortune of loosing all my anker on the Banck & was ablidged to put back to Providence to refit & sailed from there 2 days ago & this day met Capt Boudetch from the Havana who tells me of the bad Marckets there is there. & now Sr I am undertacking a thing of grait consequence but Sr I hope it will turne out for the best but Sr if it does not I hope it will be overloocket by you. That is I am about to put away for Chalestown in South Carolina. I would have proseaded as far as the Havana as it was but being afraid of lenthening time & of our wines growing bad thought it best to mack the best of our way for Charlestown which is all the marckets we have to trust too now. I shall endever to macking payable on my arivall at Charlestown. If I could think of any whare else that was lickly for a better marcket I whould prosead let it be whare it whould. Excues haist as night is cuming on. Capt Boudetch can enform you of aney particulars relaiting to my affairs. My duty to you and my mother.

Your dutifull son
JOHN DERBY.

This John Derby came of a very distinguished Salem family, and he managed to add to its record several distinctions of his own. He it was whose swift voyage across the Atlantic, just after the battle of Lexington, made it possible to present the American version of that encounter to the English people before the official British Army version arrived. Incidentally, he scored one of the greatest news "beats" or "scoops" in all history for the little four-page weekly newspaper of Salem, *The Essex Gazette*, a copy of which, containing an account of the recent

battle, he carried over to an astonished Europe. The Provincial Congress, of which his father, Richard Derby, was a member, meeting at Concord three days after the fight, urgently desired that its view of the armed clash with the stepmother country should have the priority in influencing British public opinion, but General Gage got his report started nearly four days ahead of theirs. This lead was more than overcome, however, by Captain John Derby, sailing his father's speed schooner Quero, and the American statement of the case was well circulated before the British account finally arrived.

This splendid triumph of Salem's seamanship, and her host of other triumphs on the sea, are performances worthy of the motto on her seal: "Divitis Indiæ usque ad ultimum sinum," which is translated, "To the farthest port of the rich East." In the light of her equally well managed achievements in smuggling, however, this motto would approach nearer to reality if it were lengthened so as to read: "To the farthest port of the rich East, and smuggle the riches back home."

XV

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF PURITAN NEW ENGLAND

There is a belief, widely prevalent to-day, that history should be the cringing slave of public policy, rather than its trustworthy guide. According to this belief the facts which history presents should be determined, not by the historians, but by those who are supposed to understand better than they what the public welfare requires of the historic record. In particular, there are a great number of persons, grouped in powerful organizations, who are now insisting, even to the point of coercion, that no present-day explorer of our national or colonial history shall bring to light, and certainly to no widespread public notice, any facts which seem to discredit the traditional and popular view of our heroic and glorious past. The authenticity of the facts is rarely questioned. The propriety of presenting them to the public, or at least of giving them so much prominence, is often sharply challenged.

In anticipation of such a challenge to the facts presented in this little book, a further word beyond what has been said in the preface seems appropriate. First, as to the belief that Clio should be a slave rather than

a guide, and that her utterances should be determined, not by her faithful disciples, but by the self-appointed guardians of public welfare. This willingness to substitute mythology for history, and to cling fondly to that which is known to be untrue, is shared by so many admirable people to-day that the historians of this country have issued a formal, public protest and warning against it. This warning is in the form of a set of resolutions adopted by the American Historical Association, the national society which includes in its membership practically all the leading writers and teachers of history in the United States. The relevant parts of these resolutions, dealing with the teaching of history in the schools, read as follows: —

"Be it resolved . . . that genuine and intelligent patriotism, no less than the requirements of honesty and sound scholarship, demand that textbook writers and teachers should strive to present a truthful picture of the past and present . . . that criticism of history textbooks should therefore be based not upon grounds of patriotism but only upon grounds of faithfulness to fact as determined by specialists or tested by consideration of the evidence; that the cultivation in pupils of a scientific temper in history and the related social sciences, of a spirit of inquiry and a willingness to face unpleasant facts, are far more important objectives than the teaching of special in-

terpretations of particular events; and that attempts, however well meant, to foster national arrogance and boastfulness and indiscriminate worship of national 'heroes' can only tend to promote a harmful pseudo-patriotism."

Second, as to the damage, if any, done to the Puritan tradition by the facts presented in this book, or by the manner of their presentation. The author's own profound admiration for many of the leaders in early New England has not been lessened in the slightest degree because of the facts he has discovered and related about them. Rather, he has felt reassured to find that behind the myths of impossible, intolerable, unhuman goody-goodiness there really were men and women of heroic character and achievement, so abundantly equipped with noble qualities and noble deeds that laudatory lying about them was at best superfluous. Their fame shines all the brighter when the darkness which surrounded them is more adequately revealed. The policy of trying to conceal or to minimize their faults and limitations seems far more likely to produce, in the mind of the present-day schoolboy or citizen, a cautious but cynical skepticism than the desired patriotic reverence, and to deepen the suspicion of many that all national history is a set of half truths, more conducive to jingoistic patriotism than to intellectual honesty.

Finally, a certain lightness of manner seems appro-

priate in dealing with the lighter aspects of life, even the life of a revered Puritan forefather. The prejudices and practices of the seventeenth century can hardly fail to seem humorous, at some points, to the twentieth; yet this fact neither disparages the earlier century nor exalts the later. Trying to measure the one by the other is unprofitable and misleading. No doubt the twentieth century would have seemed humorously absurd to the seventeenth-century person, if he could have foreseen it in some of its aspects; and the twenty-third century may laugh at both of them equally, yet revere that which was of permanent worth in each. In like manner, we moderns may smile at the foibles and incongruities of our forebears without any loss of respect for that which was permanently worthful in their lives.

However distressing *The Not-Quite Puritans* may be to those who insist on regarding the early New Englander as a fleshless demigod and a haloed ascetic, it may find a welcome with the followers of that eminent son of New England, Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his worldly-wise remark that "we must have a weak spot or two in a character before we can love it much."

AUTHORITIES

1. *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 1674–1729 (Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, Series 5, Volumes V, VI, and VII). Packed full of the facts of everyday life. Judge Sewall was a two-hundred-pound ascetic, whose excellent appetite and cheerful disposition were more or less successfully restrained by his Puritan conscience. He related everything that interested him, from the sublime to the ridiculous, sometimes with alarming frankness.

2. *The Diary of Cotton Mather*, 1681–1708 (Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections, Series 7, Volumes VII and VIII). A record of what God did for New England, largely through Cotton Mather. This eminent Boston divine was the busiest man in America, enormously prolific in sermons, pamphlets, and books, feverishly active in praying, fasting, witch-hunting, and sin-detecting. The diary reveals Puritanism at its most.

3. Bradford's *History of Plimoth Plantation.* First published in 1856, but written before 1650, by William Bradford, the second governor of the Plymouth colony. His shocking truthfulness sometimes terrified a reverent posterity. In one place he exclaims, "Horrible it is to mention, but ye truth of ye

historie requires it," and soon afterward the editors note that "a leaf is here wanting in the original manuscript, it having been cut out."

4. *Diary of Joshua Hempstead of New London,* 1711–1758 (New London County Historical Society, Collections, Volume I). Daily news items of the barnyard, the courtyard, the churchyard, and the graveyard: the outrageous misbehavior of an unruly cow; a grandson's row with the local police; the calling of the local parson to "be President of Yale Colledge"; the deaths of countless worthies and unworthies, called by God or sent by the gallows.

5. John Winthrop's *History of New England from* 1630 *to* 1649. A journal of events, in chronological order, written by the founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and continuing up to within a few weeks of his death. Among his anxieties were the too modish gowns worn by the lady pioneers, and the "swearing and ribaldry speeches" of Harvard undergraduates.

Since the purpose of this list is to indicate the quality, rather than the number, of the authorities consulted, it seems unnecessary to mention more. Two others may be named, nevertheless, because they are, unlike those given above, representative of the scurrilous publications which appear in every age. Such works as Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan,* published in 1637, and Edward Ward's *A Trip to*

New England, published in 1699 (the latter so frank as to be secreted in the "treasure rooms" of libraries), are well known to the author, but they have not been relied upon to support any of the facts stated in this volume.

Not the *New England Courant,* that yellow journal in which Benjamin Franklin helped his brother to offend the Bostonian proprieties, but rather the *Boston News-Letter,* staid and proper ancestor of American journalism, has been here chosen for newspaper references.

Naturally, the provincial, town, church, and court records of the several parts of New England have been consulted, among which more attention has been paid to the Essex County Quarterly Court records than to any other.

Unpublished manuscripts have been used a little, including the Derby and Crowninshield Papers and several log books of old Salem ships (thanks to the unfailing courtesy of the Essex Institute), and the records of the Second Church in Boston, written by its early ministers, John Mayo, Increase Mather, and Cotton Mather (for access to which gratitude is due to their scholarly custodian, Miss Frances A. Plimpton, and to the Reverend Doctor E. R. Shippen).

Any acknowledgment of the courteous aid received in such a study as this, extending over several years, is sure to be marred by unintended omissions. At the

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risk of these, I shall venture, nevertheless, to record here my thanks to the officials of the Widener Library at Harvard University, the Boston Athenæum, the Boston Public Library, the Library of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, the Library of the Essex Institute at Salem, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress at Washington, the Yale University Library, the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, the Public Library of New London, and the Connecticut College Library.

The encouragement and assistance generously given by numerous individual scholars, I shall not attempt to ackowledge in this place.

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